



Estonia

“Feeding in” and “Feeding out”, and Integrating Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities

A Study of National Policies

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*Disclaimer: This report does not necessarily reflect
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or the Member States.*

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1. Feeding in and feeding out analysis

Summary

In the Estonian Progress Report on the Action Plan for Growth and Jobs 2005- 2007 for implementation of the Lisbon Strategy (NRP) is provided main progress in implementing measures under all nine objectives, achieved results on the basis of outcome indicators, main shortcomings in the period 2005-2006. It is worth to emphasise that outcome results of most of the measures have been more positive than expected so has been possible to set new more ambitious aims under most of the objectives for 2008.

On the basis of the Good Engagement Practices the relevant stakeholders have been involved in the NRP preparation process. No reference to the Social Inclusion /Social Protection (SI/SP) challenges in the Estonian NRP has been directly made and links to the SI/SP process can be identified only in single activities of measures. Although the NRP does not refer explicitly to a possible impact on social inclusion policies and objectives, the economic and employment policies of the NRP are definitely contributing to the social cohesion/inclusion process. Among the expected results of the objectives, measures and activities in the NRP we can underline the impact on jobless households. But not any impact on working poor, income distribution or other signs of contributions to achieving the social inclusion objectives has been mentioned. The social cohesion impact of different policies (e.g. tax policy) can be seen in the growth of resources on the lowest incomes and reducing income inequalities.

The attention to social cohesion in terms of balance among the three overarching objectives is not given directly. However, the activities concerning active labour market measures, long-term unemployment, pension reform, welfare services, youth, childcare, education and training etc. are aimed at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion. For these activities specific targets and indicators have been set to monitor the developments. Even more, considering the more positive than expected developments, more ambitious targets are set for 2008.

The cross-reference to the SI/SP process is not clear and consistent in the NRP. Even such terms as social cohesion and poverty are not mentioned, social inclusion is mentioned once. However, essentially the SI/SP challenges have been taken into consideration, e.g. the activities to promote modern social protection systems, including pensions and healthcare are planned. These activities are linked to the social protection and social inclusion process but are insufficient to meet challenges of the SI/SP process, especially concerning health care financing. There are several measures promoting an inclusive labour market and these are consistent with the SI/SP objectives. The NRP focuses specifically on the inclusion of those farthest away from the labour market concerning such risk groups as youth, disabled and long-term unemployed. There are clear pathways towards employment fixed in the NRP through case management networks. The NRP is contributing to the eradication of poverty mainly through measures ensuring inclusive labour market to increase the employment, as well as by activities to adapt education and training systems. The NRP has set a goal of supporting employment by shifting the tax burden from workforce taxation to natural resources exploitation and environment pollution taxation, and increasing the relative importance of indirect taxation compared to direct taxation.

The NRP refers to the ICT use to develop a more efficient public communication (e-services) and to improve ICT-related knowledge and skills in the education (e-learning etc.), which support coping with the challenges of a knowledge-based society and gives inclusive nature to the information society issues.

1.1. Feeding in

1.1.1. Stakeholders' involvement/consultation in the Lisbon National Reform Programme (NRP)

The background for stakeholders' involvement/consultation in the NRP is that Estonia has implemented the Good Engagement Practices¹ under coordination of the State Chancellery to raise the quality and social legitimacy of resolutions and to increase the participation of the non-profit, private, and public sectors in preparing and making decisions. To ensure well-coordinated implementation of the NRP the following steps were taken in 2006:

- the Government approved in June the position of the Strategy Director and Strategy Office in the State Chancellery to ensure high level coordination of the implementation of the NRP;
- the inter-ministerial working group responsible for coordinating implementation activities was established by the Secretary of State,
- the working group is headed by the Strategy director and comprises representatives from the following institutions: the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Bank of Estonia, the State Chancellery,
- informal sector specific sub-working groups have been established (coordinator and general supervisor for the macroeconomic policy is the Ministry of Finance, for microeconomic policy is the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, for employment policy the Ministry of Social Affairs),
- social partners, local government representatives through two national associations of local authorities (Association of Estonian Cities and Association of Municipalities of Estonia), non-profit organisations' representatives through the Network of Estonian Non-profit Organizations (EMSL) etc. stakeholders and experts from universities and research institutions are actively involved in the NRP process and have contributed to the preparation of the NRP in several preparatory meetings, submitting also written proposals and opinions,
- to analyse the implementation process seminars were held in June and July with the involvement of different stakeholders (partners, ministries),

¹ Administrative agencies, non-profit organizations, or representational organizations that create documents should involve interest groups from all sectors in the decision-making process to ensure that the strategic documents being drawn up will be balanced and based on the public interest. The objective of the Good Engagement Practices is to harmonize the principles, from which the public sector institutions and non-profit organizations can proceed in involving the public and interest groups in decision-making. The Good Engagement Practices are a partnership and cooperation document, which includes eight recommended principles, which place great importance on the clarity of goals, openness of relationships, and dedication to goals. The Good Engagement Practices are a basis for non-profit organizations and government institutions to work out more specific engagement directives for themselves and to find answers to questions that arise in the practice of engagement. The Good Engagement Practices will be used by administrative agencies in the preparation of at least the following strategic documents: drafts of laws and their amendments; drafts of the regulations and directives of the Government of the Republic; drafts of Ministers' decrees; documents, concepts, policies, development plans, and programs that are important to the country's development; drafts of legislation of European Union institutions and other strategic documents (i.e. green and white books); instructions and procedures for rendering public services; conventions and international agreements, as well as the documents that are worked out within their framework, and that influence the society (The Government of the Republic of Estonia. 2006. <http://www.valitsus.ee/?id=5603>).

- the Government consulted with the *Riigikogu* (in April and June) about the implementation of priority objectives; on September 21, the NRP was sent to the *Riigikogu* and then an official consultation procedure with the partners and ministries was also launched,
- partners' feedback before the consultation procedure and also official opinions during this procedure were taken into account in the NRP,
- at the final seminar (on October 4) with all stakeholders attending comments were discussed and final conclusions were drawn and results of debates and proposals of relevant ministries and partners were considered and taken into account, where possible, in the final version of the NRP.

1.1.2. *Social Inclusion /Social Protection challenges*

No reference to the Social Inclusion /Social Protection (SI/SP) challenges in the Estonian NRP has been directly made and links to the SI/SP process can be identified only in single activities of measures.

Therefore it is not very appropriate to use the suggested table as a help-tool for the analysis. Also NRP does not provide the expected table. Notwithstanding, a table was somehow made for an example and to get the experience (see table in the Annex).

1.2. Feeding out

There are several aspects in the NRP which have an impact on achieving social inclusion objectives. These are the following in relation to employment, which is stated in the Estonian NAP inclusion as the best protection against poverty and exclusion:

- growth of employment is contributing to the increase long-term sustainability of fiscal policy and the subsistence of ageing consequences. E.g. the number of employed increased 6.7% in the first two quarters of 2006, which means more than 40,000 additional taxpayers who by paying social tax will improve the financial conditions of state pension insurance and the health insurance fund (presuming these additional employed people earn Estonian average gross wages, they contribute 1.5 billion (0.8% of 2006 expected GDP) worth of pension- and health insurance taxes. Employment and wage growth together with the increase of the tax base by the rise of social tax minimum liability from previous 700 EEK to 1,400 EEK in 2006 (in 2007, to 1,500 and eventually equated with minimum wage in 2009) enables to improve the living standards of pensioners,
- development of in-service training and retraining opportunities for the unemployed and the employed are supported by benefits allowing the unemployed to participate in labour market training. For participation in a training course lasting at least 40 hours a stipend is available and the travel and accommodation costs can be partially (monthly limit 1,200 EEK) compensated; the state pays the social tax for the unemployed who participate in a training course lasting no less than 80 hours and provides medical assistance should an accident occur while practising,
- providing transport allowances and health insurance to participants in work based training and labour market training,
- effective connection of social measures and active labour market measures - linking of the subsistence benefits and unemployment benefits with the requirement of active job-seeking,
- development of social welfare services to keep disabled persons in the labour market (the disabled persons who work or who are entering the labour market are supported by compensation of the costs of going to work - social transportation service).

Although the NRP does not refer explicitly to a possible impact on social inclusion policies and objectives, the economic and employment policies of the NRP are definitely contributing to the social cohesion/inclusion process. Among the expected results of the objectives, measures and activities in the NRP we can underline the impact on jobless households. But not any impact on working poor, income distribution or other signs of contributions to achieving the social inclusion objectives has been mentioned. The social cohesion impact of different policies (e.g. tax policy) can be seen in the growth of resources on the lowest incomes and reducing income inequalities. Reduction of the taxation of labour – by lowering the income tax to 23% in 2006 and its continuous lowering to 20% by 2009; increasing basic exemption rate from previous 1,700 EEK to 2,000 EEK per month in 2006; lowering unemployment insurance premium rates – will increase the resources of those with the lowest incomes. On the basis of very rough calculations it can be said that as a result of changing these rates average net wage will increase 2.4%, whereas the effect on lower wage levels is expected to be higher (at the level of the minimum wage – the growth of net wage will be 3.4%). Opportunities for economically less-insured students to participate in vocational training and ensuring so better opportunities in the labour market in the future are created with the extension of the education allowance (for students who have entered the vocational education system following basic school) and school food programme (free school lunch and milk) to the students of vocational schools.

1.3. Analysis questions per (relevant) guideline of the NRP implementation report

GL14 to create a more competitive business environment and encourage private initiative through better regulation

The term of corporate social responsibility of business is not mentioned and a sign of awareness of corporate social responsibility is very difficult to find in the NRP.

GL17 Implement employment policies aiming at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion

The attention to social cohesion in terms of balance among the three overarching objectives is not given directly. However, the activities concerning active labour market measures, long-term unemployment, pension reform, welfare services, youth, childcare, education and training etc. are aimed at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion. For these activities specific targets and indicators have been set to monitor the developments. Even more, considering the more positive than expected developments, more ambitious targets are set for 2008.

GL18 Promoting a lifecycle approach to work

⇒ GL 2 to safeguard economic and fiscal sustainability as a basis for increased employment

The cross-reference to the SI/SP process is not clear and consistent in the NRP. Even such terms as social cohesion and poverty are not mentioned, social inclusion is mentioned once – page 35, in the context of the coherence with the Estonian National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013 (objective 2 – Ensuring the long-term sustainability of fiscal policy). However, essentially the SI/SP challenges have been taken into consideration, as the activities to promote modern social protection systems, including pensions and healthcare are planned. These activities are linked to the social protection and social inclusion process but are insufficient to meet challenges identified in the SI/SP process, especially concerning health care. Under measure 2.1: *Insuring long-term sustainability of pension insurance system guaranteeing sufficient standard of living for pensioners* (planned activities

are covered in the amount of 153 million EEK from the state budget incl. structural funds and for 2007 24 million EEK, respectively) and under measure 2.2: *Insuring long-term sustainability of health insurance system and thereby guaranteeing people's financial security in case of health risks* (118 million EEK from the state budget incl. structural funds and for 2007 43 million EEK, respectively) of the NRP are given the following activities to ensure an adequate level of pensions and financial stability of health care:

- completion of pension reform, implementation of reforms for special pensions, old-age pensions under favourable conditions and superannuated pensions; rising the retirement age to 63 years by 2016; increasing the tax base for state pension insurance (the rise of social tax minimum liability from 1,400 in 2006 to 1,500 in 2007, with the goal to reach the amount of minimum wage by 2009). These activities are in principle consistent with the activities mentioned in the Estonian National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion (NRSSPSI). These measures are socially adequate and accessible as expected results for 2008 are: Pillar One of the pension insurance is continuously at least balanced and there are sufficient reserves to guarantee liquidity (in 2005, deficit 0.2% of GDP, reserves 0.8% of GDP); the old-age pension of a pensioner with 30 years of service must be at least 40% of average net wages of a male labourer (in 2004, the replacement rate of the first pillar pensions was 45.6%);
- increasing the tax base of health insurance; increasing the population coverage with health insurance; considering a reduction in health insurance liabilities. These activities are consistent with the activities mentioned in the Estonian NRSSPSI. Expected results: the health insurance fund is continually at least balanced and there are sufficient reserves to guarantee liquidity (2005 surplus was 0.1% of GDP and reserves were 0.5% of GDP); 99% of the population is covered by health insurance (94% in 2005), patient satisfaction is at the same level as today (in 2004, 59% of the insured considered the quality of health care good or rather good). Here it has to be emphasised that according to a research by Faktum in 2005² Estonian people are mostly satisfied with the quality of health care, but discontent is caused by accessibility (long waiting lists, especially access to specialists). Despite that in the 2007 state budget a growth of the sick fund budget and emergency care financing is envisaged, the underfinance of health care during a longer period has led to that access to health care is growing increasingly complicated. For example, because health care workers, due to their low wages, go to work in other jobs, or specialists go abroad, accessibility will continue to decrease, which one day will cause a decline in the quality of health care.

A good interaction between the social protection system and the labour market can be seen in activities of the measure 8.1: *Increasing employment by providing active labour market measures and supportive social measures* - planned activities are as follows (total budget of the measure, activities concerning active labour market measures and all expected results of the measure 8.1 are given under *GL19* in this report):

- integrating labour market and social welfare services and developing social welfare services supporting employment capacity through:
 - developing a vocational and occupational rehabilitation system for disabled persons,
 - developing social welfare services to keep disabled persons in the labour market (incl. personal assistants/support persons, social transport, sheltered and supported work etc.),
 - organisation of training aimed at development of the required skills and knowledge among social workers for the purpose of bringing discouraged persons and the long-term unemployed back to the labour market,
 - developing an information system of social statistics to improve information availability about the unregistered unemployed and inactive people as well as to insure concrete links between receiving social benefits and participation in active labour market or social measures,

² Ministry of Social Affairs. 2006. [http:// www.sm.ee](http://www.sm.ee).

- improving the functioning of the social benefits and labour market benefits system to motivate persons to go to work instead of living from benefits through:
 - making transport allowances and health insurance available to participants in work based training and labour market training,
 - effectively connecting participation in social measures and active labour market measures with the availability of subsistence benefits and unemployment benefits,
 - evaluating effectiveness of the social welfare system (survey Analysis of the influence of Estonian social benefits and tax system on people's incentives for labour supply).

The reconciliation of work and family life is addressed clearly and activities under the abovementioned measure (8.1) are forward looking taking into account the growing trend of births in recent years:

- diversifying and improving the availability of childcare services aiming to simplify the re-entering to the market through:
 - fostering the childcare system,
 - training of childcare providers and providing counselling on business start-up,
 - creating database on companies, self-employed persons and third sector organisations providing childcare services.

GL19 Ensuring inclusive labour markets

There are several measures promoting an inclusive labour market and these are consistent with the SI/SP objectives. The NRP focuses specifically on the inclusion of those farthest away from the labour market concerning such risk groups as youth, disabled and long-term unemployed. There are clear pathways towards employment fixed in the NRP through case management networks. The NRP is contributing to the eradication of poverty mainly through measures ensuring inclusive labour market to increase the employment, as well as by activities to adapt education and training systems.

Under measure 7.3: Increasing the employment readiness of young people by improving the effectiveness of youth work the following activities are planned (from state budget incl. structural funds 114 million EEK in 2005-2006 and 72 million EEK in 2007, respectively):

- the involvement of youth participative bodies and youth representative bodies in youth-related decision-making regarding education, employment, health, culture and social affairs, and thereby creating the respective consultation schemes at the state and local level;
- the improvement of the quality of youth work through application of the professional standards of the employees in the field;
- strengthening of youth work institutions and youth work networks by fostering the programs for open youth centres, information and counselling centres and speciality schools and improving cooperation of stakeholders incl. supporting co-operation projects with schools and employers on local level.

The expected results in 2008 are: involvement of youth (7-26) in youth work 60% (42% in 2006); participation of young people in youth associations 5% (3% in 2006); youth associations in each county and larger cities 20 (15 in 2006); the number of youth work institutions (incl. open youth centres, hobby schools) increase to 500 (420 in 2006).

Under measure 8.1: *Increasing employment by providing active labour market measures and supportive social measures* the activities planned (total 757 million EEK from state budget incl. structural funds and 411 million EEK in 2007, respectively) concern youth, long-term unemployed, disabled and elderly people with the involvement of partners and local authorities (some of the activities are given under *GL18* in this report):

- implementing labour market services based on case management networks through:
 - development of basic training programmes of case management networks in the framework of the university level social work programmes,
 - working out and implementing supplementary training programmes on case management networks for the members of existing networks,
 - starting to provide labour market services based on the principles of case management networks,
 - introducing the post of employers' consultant in the public employment service system in order to improve cooperation with employers in respect of finding and training labour force corresponding to the needs of employers,
- developing and providing new labour market services to risk groups through:
 - introducing the basic working skills training service mainly to the long-term unemployed,
 - working out and systematically implementing tailor-made services for disabled persons (adaptation of work places, provision of free usage of special aids, assistance at job interviews, working with the assistance of support person),
 - working out and systematically implementing work based training targeted at the youth,
 - reviewing and adapting the national public employment service system (incl. the introduction of effective budgetary control, creation of a result-based motivation system, training of staff) to increase the implementation capacity of active labour market policy,
- developing a monitoring and evaluation system of the labour market measures through:
 - mapping of the risk groups aiming to define better their needs concerning provision of labour market services,
 - fostering the information system of labour policy statistics aiming to improve the quality of the labour policy management,
 - development and implementation of the methodology for follow-up evaluation of the employment services in order to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the employment services,
 - developing the methodology for evaluation of customer satisfaction in the labour market system in order to evaluate and improve the quality of the employment services (the Phare Twinning Light project),
- assessing the impact of the free movement of workers on the supply of labour through:
 - making proposals to the Statistical Office to improve statistics on immigration and emigration,
 - analysis of the occupational migration potential (based on interviews) with the aim of evaluating the impact of the free movement of labour and the related transition periods on the Estonian labour market.

It has to be emphasised that positive trends in the labour market during last years have influenced setting targets for 2008 - most of the indicators characterising the labour market have been improved in the NRP. Expected results of the measure 8.1 in total (see also activities above under *GL 18*): number of long-term unemployed 18,500 (initial target was 27,000, in 2006 27,900); the share of registered unemployed participating in active labour market measures 22% (initial target was 35%, in 2006 15.4%); 65% of participants of training courses finding the job (in 2006 44%); employment rate of disabled persons 30%, 26% in 2002; employment rate (15-64) 69% (initial target 65.8%), in 2010 – 70% (initial target 67.2%), 2014 – 72% (initial target 70%) (in 2006 64%); employment rate of women (15-64) 66.9% (initial target 63.3%), in 2010 – 68.3% (initial target 65%) (in 2006 61.9%); employment rate of older people (55-64) 63.4% (initial target 55%) (in 2006 55.7%); share of youth unemployed in the perspective age group (15-24) 3.8% (initial target 6%, in 2006 5.4%); activity rate 73.1% (initial target 71.3%, in 2006 69.6); long-term unemployment rate 2.7% (initial target 4.0%, in 2006 4.2%).

It is worth discussing more thoroughly the decrease regarding the share of registered unemployed participating in active labour market measures. In the NRP it has been stated that the target was revised because the expectations set for 2008 were too optimistic. This statement does not make sense. In order to reduce the dependency of participation in active labour market measures on individuals' willingness, the Labour Market Services and Benefits Act (entered into force in 2006) links better the active labour market measures with benefits. This Act stipulates preparation of an individual job action plan as a new method where the unemployed person agrees on what (services) he/she undertakes to find a job and on what depends whether or not s/he gets unemployment benefit. Here it is important to emphasise the expected increase in the number of the registered unemployed as the monthly unemployment benefit will rise from 400 EEK to 1000 EEK in 2007; also transport and accommodation benefits are envisaged for participants in work based training and labour market training. This should increase the efficiency of relationships between active labour market measures and benefits. Contrary to what was stated in the NRP, in the situation where the participation in active labour market measures is promoted, the share of registered unemployed participating in active labour market measures should increase, considering also that unemployment has sharply diminished.

Under measure 8.2: Improving the health of the population and insuring better working conditions the following activities are planned (405 million EEK from the state budget incl. structural funds, 256 million EEK in 2007, respectively) :

- reducing premature illness and death:
 - promoting healthy lifestyle by implementing the Strategy for Preventing Cardiovascular Diseases,
 - reducing the burden caused by the use of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs through increasing public awareness, limiting availability, helping addicts and increasing tobacco-free environment,
 - enhancing HIV/AIDS prevention by implementing the Strategy of the HIV/AIDS Prevention, improving the management of contagious disease epidemics and increasing reacting capacity by establishing a monitoring system for contagious diseases as well as a modern laboratory base with better diagnostic possibilities,
 - reducing and preventing the health hazards related to the living environment by organizing the health protection system,
- promotion of the working environment through development of a system of insurance of occupational accidents and diseases, which promotes a more efficient application of occupational safety requirements and a system for the prevention of occupational diseases.

Though the situation in the area of occupational accidents and diseases has improved, the targets set are on the initial level and the expected results in 2008 are: average living expectancy for men 67 and women 78 (66.25 and 77.78 in 2005, respectively), lost workdays due to work accidents 137,000 (125,314 in 2005), number of fatal work accidents per 100,000 workers 4.7 (3.9 in 2005).

GL21 Promote flexibility combined with employment security and reduce labour market segmentation, having due regard to the role of social partners

- ⇒ GL 5 to promote greater coherence between macroeconomic, structural and employment policies
- ⇒ GL 9 to facilitate the spread and effective use of ICT and build a fully inclusive information society

The NRP has set a goal of supporting employment by shifting the tax burden from workforce taxation to natural resources exploitation and environment pollution taxation, and increasing the relative importance of indirect taxation compared to direct taxation. Measure 3.1: *Reorganization of the tax system with more emphasis on taxing the consumption and exploitation of environment compared to labour* is referring to tax reform to improve incentives and to make work pay. This measure can be considered to be in line with the SI objective of "necessary resources to live in accordance with human dignity". Planned activity - reducing the taxation of labour is financed from the state budget, incl. from structural

funds 1,067 million EEK in 2006 and 530 million EEK in 2007. There have been notable achievements in last years in this regard: income tax rate was lowered to 23% in 2006 and will be lowered to 20% by 2009; basic exemption rate increased to 2,000 EEK per month, unemployment insurance premium rate paid by the employer decreased from 0.5% to 0.3% and tax paid by the employed from 1% to 0.6% in 2006 etc. The relative importance of indirect taxation as a share of GDP has increased from 12% in 2004 to 13.3% in 2005. In addition, an expected result in 2008 is the lowering of the tax burden of low-wage earners (38.9% in 2004).

Under measure 9.1: *Increasing the flexibility of the labour market and ensuring modern and balanced labour relations* the following activities are planned (from the state budget, incl. structural funds 47.5 million EEK in 2005-2006, 25.2 million EEK in 2007):

- Increasing flexibility of labour market regulations through:
 - increasing awareness about flexible forms of working and creating positive attitudes among employers and employees,
 - amending the Employees' Representative Act with the aim to achieve better involvement of workers in the activities of companies,
 - amending the Collective Labour Dispute Resolution Act with the aim to balance the freedom of workers' to organize and take action with the realization of freedom of enterprise,
 - working out principles for the regulation of temporary agency workers,
 - developing and piloting methods for assessing the impact of legal regulations on labour relationships,
- promoting modern and balanced labour relations through:
 - working out the preventive principles targeted at more balanced labour relations.

The NRP refers under measure 5 and 7 to the ICT use to develop a more efficient public communication (e-services) and to improve ICT-related knowledge and skills in the education (e-learning etc.), which support coping with the challenges of a knowledge-based society and gives inclusive nature to the information society issues.

GLs23-24 Expand and improve investment in human capital, adapt education and training system

Measures and activities concerning education and training are quite inclusive and ensure access also to economically less ensured students. Under measure 3.2: *Greater and more efficient allocation of budgetary resources to activities supporting growth and employment*, an activity is planned to increase the financing of vocational education consistent to the vocational education development plan. Under measure 7.1: *Improving flexibility and effectiveness of placement education with special emphasis on vocational education* the following activities are planned (995 million EEK from the state budget incl. structural funds and 633 million EEK in 2007, respectively):

- planning vocational education student places pursuant to the approved national development plan. Creation of the student places of state-commissioned education at the higher education level: 50% of those who have acquired general secondary education and up to 10% of those who have graduated from a vocational education institution based on basic education, preferably in professional higher education,
- the improvement of support system (study, dormitory and transportation supports) in order to create opportunities for economically less insured students to participate in vocational training (extension of the education allowance and school food programme to the students of vocational schools, the teachers' pay rise, infrastructure investments, image improvement campaigns in the media are supporting both of the activities),

- creating opportunities for the transition from vocational to higher education by financing supplementary general education studies for up to one year (as of 2006 the option of one additional year of general education became available for the graduates of vocational education institutions in adult secondary schools and in the evening study and distance learning departments of secondary schools),
- the enforcement of regulations in line with the European qualifications framework,
- the popularization of the specialities of natural and exact sciences and technology (LTT) among young people by offering innovative programs in general education schools and vocational education institutions, offering scholarships at the level of higher education, and supporting state hobby schools (e.g. technical houses, nature houses) and youth centres.

Expected results of these activities in 2008 are: 38% of primary school graduates will obtain vocational education (29% in 2006); the number of secondary schools with vocational training available exceeded already in 2006 (32) the number planned for 2008 (30); the number of graduates in the fields of natural and exact sciences and technology per 1000 residents aged 20-29 will rise 15% by 2010 (level 12.1 in 2006, 38% rise in comparison with 2004).

Under measure 7.2: *Improving quality of education* the following activities are planned (8,164 million EEK from the state budget incl. from structural funds and 4,787 million EEK in 2007, respectively):

- modernisation of the study process (new national curriculum for basic and secondary schools; professional standards for (general and vocational education) teachers and initiation of a system of professional qualifications; amendment of the external assessment system of general education schools, which allows for taking the local context and students' special needs into account; improvement of teacher training; development of an integrated counselling system and internal and external evaluation system of schools; improvement of the general education financing model; participating in international comparative surveys for the evaluation of competencies acquired by students; launching a system of ensuring the quality of vocational education;
- creating state-commissioned student places at the level of higher education pursuant to the higher education strategy – approximately 6,300 in the first cycle. Increasing the international competitiveness of higher education through legislation allowing for greater specialisation of higher education institutions, infrastructure investments, a more detailed regulation of quality standards, concentration of resources, relicensing of educational institutions and issuance of joint degrees and diplomas,
- fostering state initiatives to improve IT-related knowledge and skills as well as to develop respective infrastructure and learning environment in order to encourage the shift from basic skills development to the more intensive use of ICT in the learning process and provide support to coping with the challenges of a knowledge-based society ('The Learning Tiger' for general and vocational schools, 'Tiger University+'),
- improving the quality of the learning environment in vocational schools (rooms, study equipment),
- improving cooperation with employers/entrepreneurs and educational institutions in order to increase the learning quality, including making the apprentice's system more effective and increasing the role of employers in councils of vocational institutions.

Expected results are: 85% of 22-years-olds have secondary education in 2010 (80.9% in 2006); the shares of people (30-34) with fifth and sixth level ISCED educations remain stable (32.5% in 2006); the share of early school leavers (among age group 18-24) with only lower-secondary education and not in education or training is not over 10% in 2010 (14% in 2005); school dropouts under 1% in basic schools

(forms 7-9) and under 3% in secondary schools (form 10) in 2013 (1.2% and 3.7% in 2003/2004, respectively), average cost of a student place in vocational education is 1.5 times higher than in general education. The policy response to reducing significantly the number of early school leavers is sufficient and in line with NRSSPSI. The estimates of the basic school dropout rate have been corrected in connection with launching of the Estonian Education Information System (e.g. in 2004/2005 the total number of basic school dropouts was overestimated (1,268) but after the correction it is 815).

Under measure 7.4: *Developing a supplementary training and re-education system in line with the principles of lifelong learning* the following activities are planned (6 million EEK from the state budget incl. from structural funds and 4 million EEK in 2007, respectively):

- development of in-service training and retraining opportunities for the unemployed and the employed, launching a system of taking into account previous work and study experiences,
- development of the adult training financing system in order to ease access to training for all adults and promote improvement of qualification or acquisition of new qualification in order to ensure the competitiveness of the Estonian labour force.

Expected result in 2008: 10% (5.9% in 2005) of the adult population (aged 25-64) participating in lifelong learning.

Under measure 7.5: *Developing vocational, career and learning counselling* the following activities are planned (14 million EEK from the state budget incl. from structural funds and 9.2 million EEK in 2007, respectively):

- to foster a system of professional qualifications in order to increase flexibility of educational system and improve its conformity with the demand of labour market,
- to improve forecasting of long- and short-term labour market needs through introducing and implementing a system of sectoral needs analysis by working out a respective methodology.

2. Ethnic minorities

2.1. General background³

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia,⁴ all people are equal before the law, nobody can be discriminated because of his/her nation, race, colour of skin, gender, language, origin, faith, political or other convictions, as well as due to property and social status or for other reasons; everyone has the right to education. The rights, freedoms and duties of each and every person, as set out in the Constitution, shall be equal for Estonian citizens and for citizens of foreign states and stateless persons in Estonia. Estonian citizens have the right to freely choose activity, profession and job. Law may stipulate the conditions for and regulate using that right. Citizens of foreign states and stateless persons who are in Estonia have this right equally with Estonian citizens, unless otherwise provided by law.

³ Based mainly on the: Statistical Office of Estonia; *Mitte-eestlaste Integratsiooni Sihtasutus* (Non-Estonians' Integration Foundation). 2006. <http://www.meis.ee>; *Tööturu riskirühmad: mitte-eestlased* (Labour market risk groups: non-Estonians). 2006. Sotsiaalministeeriumi toimetised No 3, in other cases referred to the source.

⁴ The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia. 1992. <http://www.legaltext.ee/et/andmebaas/ava.asp?m=022>.

Today national integration is one of the key issues of Estonian development. Approximately 1/3 of the population (31.5% in 2005) of Estonia is of non-Estonian origin (Table 1), the vast majority of whom neither speaks Estonian nor are they fully integrated into the mainstream of Estonian political, social and cultural life.⁵ Fluency in the national language is considered a prerequisite for the political, economic, social and cultural integration of non-Estonians living in Estonia.⁶

Table 1. Largest ethnic groups in Estonia 1934 – 2005, %

Ethnic group	1934	1989	2000	2005
Estonian	88.0	61.5	67.9	68.5
Russian	8.2	30.3	25.6	27.5
German	1.5	0.2	0.1	0.1
Swedish	0.7	-	-	-
Ukrainian	-	3.1	2.1	2.1
Byelorussian	-	1.8	1.3	1.2
Total number	1,126,413	1,565,662	1,370,052	1,347,510

Source: Statistical Office of Estonia.

The citizenship issue is another important aspect of social and national integration. According to the population census of 2000, Estonian population on the basis of citizenship divided into Estonian citizens (80% of total population), Russian citizens (6.3%) and persons with undetermined citizenship status (12.4%), persons with unknown citizenship (1.3%).⁷ The share of Estonian citizens has increased due to accelerating of naturalisation (in 2000-2003 every year 3,000-4,000 people received Estonian citizenship by way of naturalisation, in 2004 over 6,500). However, the ratio of Estonian citizens to total population in Estonia is much smaller than in most of the other European countries (over 90%).

According to the population census of 2000, 81% of the population was born in Estonia, which is similar to the proportion of Estonian citizens, though these population groups do not completely coincide.⁸ The rest of the population was born mainly on the territory of the former Soviet Union, mostly in Russia (14% of the population), Ukraine and Byelorussia. 48% of approximately 400,000 people of other nationalities living in Estonia were born in Estonia. Hence, the second-generation immigrants account for a considerable part of this national minority. The number of new immigrants (immigrants of foreign origin who have come to live in Estonia after the re-establishment of independence⁹) is very small in Estonia,

⁵ Throughout the history, Estonia has been an ethnically heterogeneous country. During the first republic (1918-1939), the Estonian population was comprised of Estonians, Germans, Russians and many other nationalities. After Estonia's incorporation into the Soviet Union in 1940, drastic changes in ethnic composition of the republic took place. The German and Swedish minorities were replaced with mostly Slavic ethnic groups such as Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians. Post World War Two ethnic situation differed significantly in its diversity and numbers from the previous centuries and thus posed inexperienced challenges to the re-established Estonian state.

⁶ Due to poor Estonian language skills, many Russian-speakers currently lack a sufficient outlet to the rest of society. Not speaking Estonian is the major impediment to non-Estonian integration in employment, culture and political life. A significant number of unilingual Russian-speaking children do not have the skills needed to compete on the job and educational markets, as reflected by markedly higher unemployment rates. In addition, the isolation of the Russian-speaking community can also pose a threat to social stability and cohesion within Estonia.

⁷ Rahvastiku kodakondsuskoosseisust Eestis ja teistes Euroopa riikides (Composition of citizenship in Estonia and in other European countries). 2005. Statistical Office of Estonia. <http://www.stat.ee/files/eva2005/rahvastiku-kodakondsuskoosseisust-eestis-ja-teistes-euroopa-riikides.pdf>.

⁸ Rahvastiku kodakondsuskoosseisust Eestis ja teistes Euroopa riikides (Composition of citizenship in Estonia and in other European countries). 2005. Statistical Office of Estonia. <http://www.stat.ee/files/eva2005/rahvastiku-kodakondsuskoosseisust-eestis-ja-teistes-euroopa-riikides.pdf>.

⁹ The Aliens Act defines the concept of aliens, immigration quota, passport requirements, visa, residence and work permits related issues, notification of circumstances and legal liability etc. The Aliens Act defines the annual immigration quota - the quota for aliens immigrating to Estonia which shall not exceed 0.05 per cent of the permanent population of Estonia annually and shall be established by the Government of the Republic of Estonia. Persons who have the right to settle in Estonia outside the immigration quota or to whom the immigration quota does not apply are not included in

but it will be increasing in connection with the impact of EU accession and fast economic growth, and then the national composition of non-Estonians will also become more diverse. So far the focus has been on children of new immigrants – providing them possibilities for language-social preparation to cope and participate as a member of Estonian society; whereas also the preservation of their ethnic language identity (see more in chapter 2.3). Specific challenges for new immigrants are discussed in the the State Integration Programme for years 2008-2013¹⁰, which is under preparation still, where one sub-purpose of socio-economic integration is inclusion of new immigrants into society.

In recent months increasingly more has been discussed in the Estonian public about allowing migrant workers into Estonia.¹¹ Entrepreneurs and politicians are of the opinion that it should be simplified and a working group established at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications will work out by the beginning of 2007 proposals how to do this. As it is a critical problem for enterprises, then the Confederation of Estonian Employers has proposed to invite also employers to participate in the working group. The government has approved the following main economic considerations based principles in regard to migrant workers: import of migrant workers is justified in the case of qualified workforce who add to local workforce, and import of cheap workforce is justified in case they are workers who replenish local market, for example temporary workforce for single projects. They are in general of the opinion that we should avoid importing such workforce that bring only a temporary solution and prolongs Estonia's growing into a high productivity and high wage country.

From July 1997 when the Refugees Act¹² came into force, till the end of 2005, 105 aliens have applied for asylum in Estonia. 4 aliens have been granted asylum in Estonia and another 10 have been granted additional protection. So far only persons who had been granted asylum (refugees) could work in Estonia, not applicants for asylum. According to the law on granting international protection to aliens, which entered into force in summer 2006, also applicants for asylum shall have the right to work, when they have stayed in Estonia for at least a year and for whom no decision has been made for reasons independent of him/her.

A survey conducted in March 2006 about the outlooks of non-Estonians¹³ indicates that most of the non-Estonians are in general satisfied with their life and believe that life will grow better in the future. Non-Estonians who have Estonian citizenship are much more satisfied and optimistic for the future than the other non-Estonians. Most dissatisfied, worried and pessimistic are people with unspecified citizenship, though compared with the previous survey (2000) the general satisfaction and optimism of people with Russian citizenship and those with unspecified citizenship have increased, with the exception of employment related issues where their satisfaction has fallen slightly.

calculating fulfilment of the immigration quota. Every Estonian has the right to settle in Estonia outside the immigration quota. The immigration quota does not apply to the following: the spouse of an Estonian citizen or of an alien who resides in Estonia on the basis of a residence permit, a minor child, adult child, parent, grandparent or ward of an Estonian citizen or of an alien who resides in Estonia on the basis of a residence permit, the citizens of the United States of America and Japan. The Minister of Internal Affairs may, on a reasoned proposal of the Minister of Economic Affairs and Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister of Culture or Minister of Education and Research, exempt specific persons from the immigration quota if their arrival in Estonia is necessary in the national interests for economic, educational, scientific or cultural development (Välismaalaste seadus (Aliens Act). 1993. <http://www.legaltext.ee/et/andmebaas/ava.asp?m=022>).

¹⁰ State Integration Programme 2008-2013 (initial version). 2006.

http://www.rahvastikuminister.ee/cms/doc/RIP_dokument_eesmargid.doc.

¹¹ Kängsepp, L., Ilisson, A. 2006. Tööjõumure murdmisega kiire käes (Urgency of breaking through the problem of workforce deficit). Äripäev, 11 September; Eamets, R., Varblane, U. 2006. Eesti vajab väärtuslikke töötajaid (Estonia needs valuable workers). Postimees, 13 October; Kross, E.-N. 2006. Väärttöajad (Migrant workers). Eesti Päevaleht, 18 October; Roots, L. 2006. Töömigratsioon ei ole midagi hirmsat (Work migration is nothing frightful). Eesti Päevaleht, 24 October, etc.

¹² Refugees Act. <http://www.legaltext.ee/et/andmebaas/ava.asp?m=022>.

¹³ Mitte-eestlaste perspektiivid. Elanikkonna küsitlus kevad 2006 (Outpools of non-Estonians. Population Survey, spring 2006). 2006. Saar Poll. <http://www.migfond.ee/ee/files/Mitte-eestlaste%20migratsiooni%20aruanne%202006.doc>.

Investigations show that depending on the citizenship the level of language proficiency of non-Estonians is extremely variable.¹⁴ The language proficiency of non-Estonians who have Estonian citizenship (71% of active speakers of Estonian) is much better compared with non-Estonians who have other citizenship and the share of Estonian language speakers among young people is even 83%. At the same time, only 25% of non-Estonians with unspecified citizenship and 5% of people with Russian citizenship speak Estonian fluently. The most recent population survey (March 2006), however, indicated that the share of Estonian speakers among Russian citizens has increased slightly (compared with the situation in 2000, the share of those who cannot speak Estonian has fallen from 40% to 34%), among people with unspecified citizenship remain nearly the same (decreased from 20% to 18%).¹⁵

An investigation of possible out-migration on non-Estonians (with questions about possible behaviour of non-Estonians living in Estonia from personal aspect and as general opinions) indicated that most of the non-Estonian living in Estonia (both who have and have not Estonian citizenship) will stay living in Estonia and approximately half of people without Estonian citizenship try to get Estonian citizenship.¹⁶ On the basis of subjective opinions about welfare of Estonian residents¹⁷ we can state that Estonian people are satisfied with their life (44% are more than average satisfied); non-Estonians are more dissatisfied than Estonians with their life - 21.6% of men and 18.7% of women with home language other than Estonian (respectively 15.5% and 10.2% with home language only Estonian) are not satisfied with their life. Major problems for non-Estonians in general and reasons for leaving Estonia are primarily economic; important problems for non-Estonians in addition to lack of economic security are poor social policy, lack of Estonian citizenship, not speaking Estonian language, poor or expensive health care services and the feeling that they are a lower sort of persons in Estonia. If to compare Estonian-speaking population to non-Estonian speaking population, we can notice a rise in the relative poverty rate in 2000-2004 (from 14% to 17%) in the households of non-Estonians, whereas in 2000 it almost did not differ from that of Estonian-speaking households.¹⁸ While most of the non-Estonians think the attitude of Estonian Government toward people of other nationalities (non-Estonians) is satisfactory or good, then the attitude toward people without Estonian citizenship is rather bad.¹⁹ It is positive in the opinion of Russian citizens and people with unspecified citizenship that the attitude of Estonian Government toward people without Estonian citizenship has grown better compared with 2000. Though most of the non-Estonians are in general satisfied with their life in Estonia and do not plan to leave, then many non-Estonians wouldn't advise their acquaintances to come to live in Estonia because they think these people are not welcome here and think it is difficult for them to find good employment in Estonia. Advantages of Estonia from the aspect of immigration mentioned by non-Estonians were the relatively high standard of living and opportunity to migrate from Estonia to other European countries.

Immigration is due to the recent history quite a delicate subject for Estonians and as expected they are most tolerant of immigrants of the same nationality (only 9.8% are against any kind of immigration).²⁰ Of other nationality and race they are much less tolerant (23.5% think they shouldn't be allowed to come to Estonia). Nearly 10% of the respondents cannot estimate the impact of immigration on Estonia and

¹⁴ Proos, I. 2006. Language proficiency of Estonian Russians and their attitude toward gymnasium reform of 2007. Integration of Estonian Society: Monitoring 2005. http://www.meis.ee/pictures/Integration_monitoring_introduction_2005_ENG.pdf.

¹⁵ Mitte-eestlaste perspektiivid. Elanikkonna küsitlus kevad 2006. 2006. Saar Poll. <http://www.migfond.ee/ee/files/Mitte-eestlaste%20migratsiooni%20aruanne%202006.doc>.

¹⁶ Mitte-eestlaste perspektiivid. Elanikkonna küsitlus kevad 2006. 2006. Saar Poll. <http://www.migfond.ee/ee/files/Mitte-eestlaste%20migratsiooni%20aruanne%202006.doc>.

¹⁷ Ainsaar, M. 2005. Rahulolu ja üldised hoiakud. Euroopa sotsiaaluuringu 2004 Eesti raport (European Social Survey 2004. Estonia). 2005. Tallinn: Eesti Tervise- ja Käitumisteaduste Tippkeskus.

¹⁸ Tiit, E.-M. 2006. Vaesus ja selle mõõtmine. Vaesuse suundumused Eestis. Poliitikaanalüüs (Poverty and its measurement. Poverty trends in Estonia. A policy analysis). Sotsiaalministeeriumi toimetised, No 8 (eds A. Kährik, Ü. Mäe, K. Pedastsaar).

¹⁹ Mitte-eestlaste perspektiivid. Elanikkonna küsitlus kevad 2006. 2006. Saar Poll. <http://www.migfond.ee/ee/files/Mitte-eestlaste%20migratsiooni%20aruanne%202006.doc>.

²⁰ Ainsaar, M. 2005. Hoiakud immigratsiooni suhtes. Euroopa sotsiaaluuringu 2004 Eesti raport (European Social Survey 2004. Estonia). 2005. Tallinn: Eesti Tervise- ja Käitumisteaduste Tippkeskus.

people who have an opinion in general do not believe immigration can exert any positive impact on Estonia. Although they think that immigration could enrich Estonia's cultural life (27% of the respondents), at the same time fearing that this may impair cultural life (31%), has bad influence on Estonia as a living environment (41%) and on Estonian economy (36%).

A source that can be used to characterise incidence of discrimination in Estonian society is the European Social Survey report.²¹ This has stated that 10.6% of the 15-year old and older Estonian population considered themselves belonging to a discriminated group, including with home language other than Estonian 27.7% of men and 22.8% women (with home language only Estonian 3.1% and 3.2% respectively). Whereas 60.5% of the respondents think the reason for discrimination is language. Estonian government supported the European Commission's proposal to proclaim the year 2007 a year of equal opportunities for all to raise awareness of the advantages of a just and solidarity-based society. Estonia is planning together with other ministries and interest groups to conduct a survey of the scope of discrimination, a campaign against discrimination and other events.²²

The problem of social integration was recognised by the Government in late 1990ies. In the year 2000, the Estonian Government adopted the State Programme 'Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007,' which operates as a framework plan for governmental agencies and other institutions for the years 2000-2007.²³ The expression of the integration process supported through the programme is the Estonian model of multicultural society that is characterised by the principles of cultural pluralism, the preservation and development of the Estonian cultural space, and a strong set of things in common. Two processes shape the nature of the integration of Estonian society: the social conformation of society on the basis of the acquisition of Estonian citizenship and knowledge of the Estonian language, on the one hand, and the enabling of the preservation of ethnic differences on the basis of the recognition of the cultural rights of ethnic minorities, on the other hand. The central objective is the formation of a population that is loyal to the nation of Estonia and reduction of the number of people without Estonian citizenship.

Non-Estonians' Integration Foundation (MEIS) was established in March 1998 by the Government of the Republic of Estonia with the objective of initiating, supporting and coordinating projects aimed at the integration of Estonian society. Integration projects are financed from various sources in the national budget as well as from sources abroad. The basis for planning the activities of the MEIS is the programme 'Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007'. MEIS is running different programmes in the spheres of education, language learning and language immersion, new immigrants, development of social competence of ethnic minorities, support and development of cultures and languages of ethnic minorities and different public awareness campaigns about tolerance, multiculturalism and social integration.

In order to achieve the goals established in the programme 'Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007', various projects related to social integration of non-Estonians have been launched under the leadership of the Minister for Ethnic Affairs. Intermediate assessment report of the State Programme 'Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007'²⁴ has acknowledged that the overall success in the development of

²¹ Vetik, R. 2005. Sotsiaalne ja poliitiline usaldus ning poliitiline aktiivsus (Social and political trust and political activity). Euroopa sotsiaaluuringu 2004 Eesti raport (European Social Survey 2004. Estonia). 2005. Tallinn: Eesti Tervise- ja Käitumisteaduste Tippkeskus.

²² Development Plan of the Ministry of Social Affairs for 2007-2010. 2006. Ministry of Social Affairs. <http://www.sm.ee>.

²³ Riiklik integratsiooniprogramm 'Integratsioon Eesti ühiskonnas 2000-2007' (State Programme 'Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007'). 2000. <http://www.riik.ee/saks/ikomisjon/programme.htm>.

²⁴ Riikliku integratsiooniprogrammi 'Integratsioon Eesti ühiskonnas 2000-2007' vahehindamisaruanne (Interim assessment report of the State Programme 'Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007'). 2006. http://www.rahvastikuminiister.ee/cms/doc/hindamine_2005_EST.pdf.

integration in Estonia has been small and implementation of the programme activities were estimated to be satisfactory.²⁵

Currently, a process has been started for the preparation of a new State Integration Programme (SIP) for years 2008-2013 and a draft document²⁶ is available on the Population Minister's website so as everyone could express his/her opinion about this.

2.2. Employment issues²⁷

People with different citizenship have to a certain extent still different rights in the Estonian labour market – 3 major groups can be distinguished in terms of law on the basis of citizenship:

- Estonian citizens,

²⁵ The summary estimate has not taken into consideration individual activities but only the general situation:

- in language-communicative integration the non-ability of non-Estonians to speak Estonian language has grown to be the main source of dissatisfaction among Estonians,
- legal-political integration improved after Estonia joined the EU in 2004, in connection with an increase in the number of people with Estonian citizenship. At the same time, young non-Estonians becoming Estonian citizens unfortunately do not have a common field of information and an identity of own country, but citizenship of a EU Member state is often used to continue education and/career outside Estonia,
- socio-economic integration improves, considering the overall rise in the standard of living irrespective of the nationality. However, Ida-Viru County is characterised by a structural unemployment and growing feeling of exclusion, therefore this region needs more attention from the aspect of integration,
- the composition of the programme needs updating, the problems are sustainability of several areas, multitude of target groups, risk management mainly on the level of individual projects, small influence of the programme steering committee on the implementation of the programme, insufficient number of impact indicators for monitoring its developments,
- it is necessary for the government to focus more attention on identifying major objectives while renewing the programme.

²⁶ The State Integration Programme 2008-2013 draft version states that remarkable success has been achieved in creating motivation for learning a language and obtaining the language, but more than before we should focus on political and socio-economic integration emphasising European democratic values. Marginality of Estonian Russian in the labour market injures not only themselves but also has a negative effect on economic development as a whole. To understand the essence of Estonian social integration the processes going on here must be placed in a wider socio-historical context. From that aspect it may be said that the main structural conflict of the national development of Estonian society at the present stage is that two kind of contradictory processes must be combined: on the one hand, national development that was interrupted by the force Soviet system. On the other hand, we must take into consideration emergence of a multicultural in a global scale, and follow humane principles of the development of basic rights, reduction of discrimination and of providing equal opportunities to all members of society. Integration presumes joining different parts of society into a whole so that differences wouldn't disappear but will develop into a wider equability on the basis of common interests of the society as a whole. Integration of Estonian society means involvement and participation of Estonian people in social life irrespective of their nationality, on the basis of equal opportunities and mutual tolerance. The main outcomes of a successful integration are receiving of Estonian citizenship and generation of a common national identity, as well as valuation of Estonian speaking proficiency and creating conditions for preserving peculiarities of minority cultures. The objectives of the integration programme can be divided into 3 groups:

- education-cultural integration – all Estonian residents have, irrespective of the nationality, equal opportunities for obtaining formal and informal education, in a uniform educational system on the basis of Estonian language, for learning their mother tongue and culture, and for obtaining skills-knowledge needed in a multicultural and language environment,
- socio-economic integration – all Estonian residents have equal opportunities for economic subsistence irrespective of their nationality,
- legal-political integration – all Estonian residents have equal opportunities for participation in social life and politics irrespective of their nationality (http://www.rahvastikuminister.ee/cms/doc/RIP_dokument_eesmargid.doc).

²⁷ Based mainly on the: Statistical Office of Estonia; Tööturu riskirühmad: mitte-eestlased (Labour market risk groups: non-Estonians). 2006. Sotsiaalministeeriumi toimetised No 3, in other cases referred to the source.

- The citizens of the European Union and the European Economic Community member states and of the Swiss Confederation, who needed until 1 May 2004 for employment in Estonia a residence permit for employment or a work permit, can now work on the basis of a residence permit, or in seasonal works without residence permit,
- citizens of other countries (so-called third countries) and stateless persons (need for employment in Estonia a permanent residence permit, a residence permit for employment, a work permit or must register employment in cases provided by law or foreign agreement).

The right of employment is directly connected with citizenship only in public service and some jobs of public service which execute power and protect public interests; only Estonian citizens can be employed in these jobs.²⁸ For other jobs of public service also citizens of EU member states can be employed. Citizens of the third countries and stateless persons may not be employed in public service. For employment in other jobs and positions citizenship is not important; it is only important that the person has a legal basis for employment in Estonia, which may differ depending on the citizenship.

On the basis of the Estonian Citizenship and Migration Board (as of the beginning of 2006) data of effective residence permits²⁹ it may be estimated how many people in Estonia fulfil some special conditions for employment and for qualifying for labour market services, compared with the citizens:

- there were 243,796 valid residence permits, including 85% permanent (gives the right of employment) and 15% temporary resident permits (right to employment is granted by residence permit for employment and temporary residence permit for entrepreneurship; residence permits issued on other grounds allow employment on the basis of a separate work permit),
- there are 8,214 valid work permits, 2,519 valid residence permits for employment and 414 for entrepreneurship,
- in 2005, 396 applications for short-term employment (up to 6 months a year) were submitted.

As the number of new immigrants and refugees in Estonia is very small, their situation in the labour market has not been studied separately.

Unlike the situation in other European countries, non-citizens in Estonia account for a higher share among middle-aged and younger pension age people. Therefore, economic activity of citizens and non-citizens is quite similar (respectively 63.0% and 62.5% of people aged 15-74 in 2005), but greater differences occur between genders. In the worst situation in the labour market are women who do not have Estonian citizenship – from them only 46% were employed in 2005 (from men 60.3%), while the employment rate of women with Estonian citizenship was 56.7%. Similarly with other countries, the unemployment rate of non-citizens is much higher than that of citizens (15.2% and 6.2% respectively). Against the background of overall growth of employment and decrease of unemployment, unemployment of non-citizens compared with Estonian citizens has decreased at a slower rate.

Participation of non-Estonians in the labour force is higher than that of Estonians and the differences across nationalities in the rates of employment and unemployment are smaller than across citizenships. The reasons are mainly that these groups do not coincide, also provisions of the law applicable to stateless persons and those with other citizenship. Compared with the employment growth of Estonians, the employment rate of non-Estonians has increased at a slower rate. However, in 2005 the difference between the employment and unemployment rates of non-Estonians and Estonians decreased sharply, to 2.4 and 7.6 percentage points respectively. The unemployment rate for Estonians in 2005 was 5.3%

²⁸ Public Service Act. <http://www.legaltext.ee/et/andmebaas/ava.asp?m=022>.

²⁹ Estonian Citizenship and Migration Board 2005. 2006. Yearbook. http://www.mig.ee/downloads/321/KMA%20arengusuunad%202006_2010.rtf.

and for non-Estonians 12.9%, whereas the difference for women was even bigger – 3.9% and 13.1% respectively.³⁰ Non-Estonians are in the labour market more active than Estonians, because the latter are much more numerous among the inactive people, including the discouraged. At the same time, the employment rate of Estonians has been constantly higher and the unemployment rate lower, hence it is for non-Estonians harder to find employment and stay in employment. The long-term unemployment rates of Estonians and non-Estonians differ several times and in 2004 over half of the long-term unemployed (64%) were non-Estonians, including women 72%. The unemployment rate of young non-Estonians dropped with a general fall of youth unemployment in 2005, but to a less extent than that of young Estonians, by 1.5 and 7.5 percentage points respectively, due to what the difference between Estonian and non-Estonian youth unemployment rates increased to be 3-fold (9.5% and 29.4% respectively).

The main obstacles for non-Estonians in the labour market as identified by research are:

- due to insufficient proficiency of the state language it is difficult to enter the labour market. The unemployment rate of 15-74 years old people who could not speak Estonian or who could only communicate on the basic level in 2003 was 15.5% or 5.5 percentage points higher than the average; their activity rate was 6.1 percentage points higher and the employment rate 8.8 percentage points lower than the average.³¹ The importance of Estonian language proficiency may differ depending on the place of residence and employment, profession, age etc. The Estonian language proficiency in Tallinn and Ida-Viru County may not considerably increase job-finding opportunities, but elsewhere in Estonia it does. Estonian language proficiency improves the outlooks of non-Estonians in the labour market primarily just compared with the compatriots who cannot speak Estonian. Young non-Estonians have better language proficiency, especially the age group entering the labour market (20-29)³², which gives them a better position in the community competition. However, the mobility of young non-Estonians is lower (compared with Estonians they have sought less additional employment, less employment abroad and changed residence less),³³ and also drug addiction, AIDS and prostitution are more widespread among young non-Estonians;³⁴
- Educational level and qualification mismatch to labour market needs is expressed most clearly in the case of young non-Estonians – while the situation of non-Estonians in the labour market in general is worse than that of Estonians with equal educational level, then the difference in the case of young people with the third level education is noticeably smaller.³⁵ The unemployment rate of non-Estonians with the lowest educational level has varied between 20 and 30% in recent years without a declining trend, but that of non-Estonians with the third level education has dropped from

³⁰ Tööturg ja tööelu 2005 (Labour market and working life 2005). 2006. Sotsiaalministeerium. <http://www.sm.ee>.

³¹ Kallaste, E., Võrk, A., Leetmaa, R., Roosma, E.-L. 2005. Töövaldkonna indikaatorite arendamine (Development of employment-related indicators). Tallinn: Poliitikauuringute Keskus PRAXIS. <http://www.praxis.ee>.

³² Integratiooni monitooring 2005 (Integration Monitoring 2005). 2005. TLÜ Rahvusvaheliste ja Sotsiaaluuringute Instituut. http://www.meis.ee/pictures/terve_aruanne.pdf.

³³ Pavelson, M. 2006. The social-economic condition of Estonians and Estonian Russians: Expectations and Changes. Integration of Estonian Society: Monitoring 2005. http://www.meis.ee/pictures/Integration_monitoring_introduction_2005_ENG.pdf.

³⁴ Lõhmus, L., Trummal, A. 2006. Süstlavahetusteenuse külastajate HIV/AIDS-iga seotud riskikäitumine ja teadmised. Esma- ja korduvkliendide võrdlev analüüs 2005 (HIV/AIDS-related risk behavior and knowledge of users of syringe exchange service. A comparative analysis of first-time and multiple clients 2005). Tervise Arengu Instituut. http://www.tai.ee/failid/SVP_esma_ja_korduvk_l_NETTI_12.01.2006.pdf; Pettai, I., Kase, H., Proos, I. 2006. Prostitutsiooni tähendus Eesti Ühiskonnas. Sisejulgeolek või majanduslik kasu (Prostitution in Estonian society. Internal security or financial gains). Eesti Avatud Ühiskonna Instituut.

³⁵ Pavelson, M. 2006. The social-economic condition of Estonians and Estonian Russians: Expectations and Changes. Integration of Estonian Society: Monitoring 2005. http://www.meis.ee/pictures/Integration_monitoring_introduction_2005_ENG.pdf.

13% in 2001 to 6.5% in 2005, still remaining over 2.5 times higher than the unemployment rate of Estonians with equal education (2.5%);³⁶

- concentration into Ida-Viru County where the unemployment rate is high, the region most affected by economic restructuring of the new independence period and bankrupts of industrial enterprises. As 80% of the inhabitants of Ida-Viru County are non-Estonians, then the labour market developments in this region have the biggest effect on how non-Estonians cope in the Estonian labour market. Moreover, the situation is aggravated by that possible language and cultural barriers affect the non-Estonians' mobility and therefore also their employment. Even more complicated is the situation of young non-Estonians and representatives of other risk groups in the labour market in Ida-Viru County. The language environment in Ida-Viru County affects the language proficiency of people living there. In Narva where the language environment is Russian speaking, only 12% of non-Estonians had an active Estonian-speaking proficiency (in Tallinn 48%) and 62% could not speak Estonian (in Tallinn 16%)³⁷. Employment problems in Ida-Viru County where the population is mostly non-Estonian have been sharper than elsewhere in Estonia. The history of the region as an industrial region and reorganisation of industry in the last ten-fifteen years has created a situation where unemployment in the region is much higher (although it has fallen, from 21.1% in 2000) than Estonian average (16.2% and 7.9% respectively in 2005) and entrepreneurial activity is lower than elsewhere in Estonia (respectively 16 and 39 operating firms per 1000 inhabitants). Also the number of new start-up enterprises is low – in Tallinn 4 new enterprises per 1000 inhabitants are established annually and in Tartu 2, while in Põlva County, Valga County and Ida-Viru County only 0.7 enterprises annually.³⁸ To solve the employment problems in Ida-Viru County, additional financial resources in addition to state budget resources have been allocated from different programmes and projects;³⁹
- attitudes and prejudices have a strong influence on the labour market situation – 80% of the Estonians are disturbed by that non-Estonians do not speak Estonian and 59% by a different behaviour and lifestyle of non-Estonians, while non-Estonians are disturbed by Estonians much less and 3% of them are strongly disturbed and 23% slightly disturbed.⁴⁰ Slightly lower but still high is the share of Estonians (37%) who do not want to work in a collective with many Russians. The antagonistic attitude has grown also among young people with low Russian speaking proficiency, which may cause problems in the future. Such attitudes may weaken the competitiveness on non-Estonians in the labour market and also in other spheres compared with Estonians. Non-Estonians estimate their position in society to be weaker than Estonians – every fourth Estonian but less than half of non-Estonians think the position of Estonians in society is better (from stateless persons and

³⁶ Labour Force Survey 2005. 2006. Statistical Office of Estonia.

³⁷ Proos, I. 2006. Language proficiency of Estonian Russians and their attitude toward gymnasium reform of 2007. Integration of Estonian Society: Monitoring 2005. http://www.meis.ee/pictures/Integration_monitoring_introduction_2005_ENG.pdf.

³⁸ Ida-Virumaa arengustrateegia 2005-2013 (Development strategy of Ida-Viru County 2005-2013). 2005. <http://portaal.ell.ee/orb.aw/class=file/action=preview/id=5417/Ida-Viru+arengustrateegia.doc>.

³⁹ Ida-Viru County has been one of the most important target regions in the piloting of measures and new services conducted in 2002-2004 within the national employment programmes to provide non-Estonians living there a maximum amount of active labour market measures through individual approach and to bring them back to the labour market. During 2002-2004, several projects have been carried out in Ida-Viru County within the national programme 'Increasing Employment, Preventing Long-Term Unemployment and Preventing Exclusion of Risk Group Persons from the Labour Market, Phare Youth employment project, ESF measure 'Inclusive Labour Market' projects etc. In parallel, actions have been taken to prevent unemployment in the region, focusing more attention on employees of large enterprises who have received a notice of dismissal. On the basis of co-operation agreements, the Labour Market Board has offered these persons vocational guidance, training, relevant retraining and advanced training, and conducted job-seeking courses together with preparing an individual action plan, for example, at Kreenholmi Valduse AS, Narva Elektriijaamade AS.

⁴⁰ Pettai, I. 2006. Tolerance in ethnic relations in Estonia. Integration of Estonian Society: Monitoring 2005. http://www.meis.ee/pictures/Integration_monitoring_introduction_2005_ENG.pdf.

Russian citizens who are not Estonians 75% and 58% respectively).⁴¹ At the same time, a small part of non-Estonians find that they have been discriminated in their job because of their nationality (3.5%) and non-proficiency of the state language (8.2%).⁴²

Non-Estonians who have registered themselves in the employment office are offered various services and benefits: informing about labour market situation and labour market services; job mediation; labour market training; career guidance; work based training; community placement; basic working skills training; wage subsidies; subsidies for starting a business; adaptation of workplace; provision of free usage of special aid; assistance at job interview; working with the assistance of a support person. The benefits are unemployment insurance benefit, unemployment benefit, grant, travel and accommodation benefit.⁴³ Like other labour market risk groups, non-Estonians are provided an individual job-seeking plan (individual action plan) immediately after registration and necessary services for them are identified and provided before the others. From the aspect of both successful competition in the labour market and general coping, the best result is guaranteed by using combined measures – language training, professional training, support of social skills and subsistence.

Many national strategy documents have focused a lot of attention on the problems of minorities in the labour market. Projects under measure 'Inclusive Labour Market' of the Estonian Development Plan for the Implementation of the EU Structural Funds - Single Programming Document 2004-2006 help most to increase employment and the largest resources have been invested in Ida-Viru County where the unemployment is the highest in Estonia. The draft law on the strategy for using national structural means 2007-2013⁴⁴ has suggested other activities on the principle of coordinated improvement of the integration of non-Estonians, which shall be implemented within the new integration programme for 2008-2013. In addition to continuing support to language training large measures are envisaged for the reduction of unemployment of non-Estonians and prevention of HIV/AIDS focusing increasingly more on Ida-Viru County. More than before they intend to implement workforce exchange programmes in different Estonian regions, shape tolerant attitudes toward different national groups and their cultural peculiarities in all population groups, particularly among young people (considerably increasing the types and scope, for instance, of youth and co-operation projects), elaborate and implement adaptation programmes for the prevention of migration related social problems. Plans of the Operational Programme of Human Resource Development for 2007-2013 involve eligible concrete activities financed by ESF for non-Estonians in the sphere of education and labour market. A strategic objective identified in the national action plan for social inclusion (NAPinclusion)⁴⁵ is integration of people of non-Estonian origin, which is tried to be achieved with activities within the State Integration Programme 2008-2013.

⁴¹ Pettai, I. 2006. Tolerance in ethnic relations in Estonia. Integration of Estonian Society: Monitoring 2005. http://www.meis.ee/pictures/Integration_monitoring_introduction_2005_ENG.pdf.

⁴² Tööelu Baromeeter 2005 (Working life barometer 2005). 2006. Elanikkonna uuringu aruanne (Population survey report). Tallinn: Sotsiaalministeerium, Saar Poll OÜ. <http://www.sm.ee>.

⁴³ Labour market services and benefits are more thoroughly described in: Viies, M. 2006. First 2006 semester report. Estonia. Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion.

⁴⁴ Riiklik struktuurivahendite kasutamise strateegia 2007-2013 (National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013). 2006. Eelnõu (Draft law)(9.03.06). EV Rahandusministeerium. <http://www.fin.ee>.

⁴⁵ National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2006-2008 under the Open Method of Coordination of the European Union. 2006. Tallinn: Ministry of Social Affairs.

2.3. Education and training issues⁴⁶

In Estonian society where the size of non-Estonian nationality groups varies from a couple of dozen people to a community of several hundred thousand, the right to education in one's native language can be applied in different ways and in different scales: in Sunday schools⁴⁷, through optional subjects in general education schools, through the language of instruction in a private school and the same in municipal schools at the request of the local government. Estonian legislation provides the possibility to acquire basic education in any language. With the permission of the Government of the Republic the education in a minority language may also continue on the upper-secondary level. The Estonian general education system fosters the integration of young people of various ethnic groups into Estonian society. National curriculum is followed on all levels of general education irrespective of the language of instruction. The school curricula define the specific characteristics arising from the language of instruction of the school and the level of proficiency in Estonian. The national curriculum sets out the requirements regarding the teaching and learning conditions, including the requirement that a school graduate of a non-Estonian-language school should acquire adequate knowledge and a sufficient level of proficiency in Estonian to enable them to act independently in the language environment and to continue studies in an Estonian-language educational institution. Pursuant to the document approved by the Government of the Republic of Estonia in August 2004 'Development strategy of the Estonian language 2004-2010',⁴⁸ the graduates from non-Estonian-language basic schools have to acquire the Estonian language on the level B2 (intermediate level), so they can make appropriate decisions for continuing studies after the basic school despite the language of instruction and their native language.

The main objective of Estonia's education policy is to provide everyone with equal opportunities for obtaining high-quality education in accordance with his/her abilities in a school near home. Priority areas include improvement of quality and flexibility of studies, creating opportunities for lifelong education and enhancement of the quality and availability of youth work. Another priority objective is the individualisation of studies and identifying the special educational needs of students during pre-schooling. The success of inclusion depends on the successful application of counselling and support systems in supporting students' individual development. An important role in the development and modernisation of the general education system has been played by the principle of education being accessible. Fulfilment of the obligation of education is provided with availability of student places, support systems and individualisation of studies, whereas availability of high-quality education does not depend on age, ethnic group, socio-economic background, health or special educational needs.

Estonia has adopted the principles of inclusive education. The Joint Inclusion Memorandum (JIM) and National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2004-2006 provide a clear direction for shaping the inclusive education. Increasing social and economic stratification and increasing number of students with special educational needs⁴⁹ forces for the development of all children and for ensuring a normal growth

⁴⁶ Based mainly on the: Statistical Office of Estonia; *Mitte-eestlaste Integratsiooni Sihtasutus (Non-Estonians' Integration Foundation)*. 2006. <http://www.meis.ee>, in other cases referred to the source.

⁴⁷ Sunday schools of national culture societies. <http://www.meis.ee/print.php?path=eng/minorities/sundayschool>.

⁴⁸ Development strategy of the Estonian language 2004-2010. 2004. Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, Estonian Language Council. http://www.eki.ee/keelenoukogu/strat_en.pdf.

⁴⁹ As of 1 January 2005, according to the Statistical Office there were 609 pre-school child care institutions with a total of 54,546 children (10,244 6-year old children in child care institutions and pre-school groups, i.e. 87% of the age group). More than 1,500 children go neither in pre-school institutions nor preparatory groups before going to school. At the same time, the share of children in pre-school institutions who get their basic education there has been increasing from year to year. So as to create all children opportunities for obtaining basic education at least during a year before school there are plans to introduce an obligation of pre-tuition. Ca 40% of the presumptive number of pre-school-age children with special development needs have been attending special and accommodation groups in pre-school child care institutions. A problem is the fact that kindergarten teachers have not sufficient preparation for noticing special needs of children and for counselling parents. When child's

environment to create effective support networks and make advice services (learning advice, psychological advice, supporting advice to children with special needs, parents and teachers, career counselling and informing of youth) accessible on all school levels. For the purposes of creating a uniform education strategy on the state level, the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research elaborated in 2006 the Development Plan for General Education system 2007–2013, taking into consideration the principles, objectives and target indicators of Lisbon strategy.⁵⁰ One of the goals of the lifelong learning strategy 2005–2008⁵¹ is to intensify social integrity of the population and development of citizenship and to improve the quality of people's life; and non-Estonians are identified as one of the risk groups of the adult education. One of the purposes of the implementation of the strategy is to raise the Estonian language skills of non-Estonian adult residents in Estonia.

In the Estonian education system educational institutions can be divided by the language of instruction and in non-Estonian education institutions the main language of instruction is Russian.⁵² Over the recent years, the number of pupils has continued to decrease in both Estonian- and Russian-language schools. The reason lies in the demographic behaviour, but in case of children whose native language is Russian the reason also lies in their movement to Estonian-language schools.⁵³ After adoption of the Education Act of the Republic of Estonia (1992)⁵⁴ there have been significant changes in schools with Russian language of instruction: the schools have introduced the National Curriculum of the Republic of Estonia, all textbooks used in non-Estonian schools have been published in Estonia. Estonian as the second language is compulsory in all schools, starting from the first study year. Russian is the language of instruction in 4 nursery-primary schools, 14 basic schools, 63 upper secondary schools, and in 20 schools with both Estonian and Russian as languages of instruction. The number of pupils in Russian-language general education schools is 42,530, which constitutes 23% of the total number of pupils in Estonia.⁵⁵ Most of the Russian-language general education institutions are located in Harju and Ida-Viru

problems are expressed only in school and support during previous development has been missing, it may influence progress and success of the child at school and may be a reason for dropping out in basic school. The general education system's development plan for the years 2007–2013 has set the objectives that 95% of 5- and 6-year old children in 2013 will participate in pre-education (in 2005 88%) and the share of children with special needs in pre-school child care institutions or school preparation groups will be constantly rising until demand will be completely satisfied in 2013. According to the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research 99.9% of the 13-15-year old children and 89.5% of the 16-18-year old children were engaged in the educational system in 2003. At the same time, 586 students dropped out from the basic school in the school year 2004/2005, which is 1% of the basic school grade III students (0.62% of the basic school students), 822 dropped out of gymnasium – 2.2% of the gymnasium students. Every year ca 5999 students stay second year in the same class. For the fulfillment of education obligation and obtaining an education in keeping with one's abilities the recent law amendments have conducted to individual approach to students and to a flexible organisation of studies. The share of pupils with special educational needs studying in ordinary schools in total number of pupils has increased in recent years from 10.8% in 2002/2003 to 12.6% in 2004/2005.

⁵⁰ Üldharidussüsteemi arengukava aastateks 2007 – 2013 (Development Plan for General Education system 2007–2013). 2006. Estonian Ministry of Education and Research. <http://www.hm.ee/index.php?popup=download&id=5274>.

⁵¹ Lifelong learning strategy 2005–2008. 2005. Estonian Ministry of Education and Research. <http://www.hm.ee/index.php?popup=download&id=4958>.

⁵² According to the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, in the academic year 2004/2005, the total number of general education daytime schools in Estonia was 604, incl. 96 primary schools, 227 basic schools, 235 secondary and upper secondary schools. 20 gymnasiums are with both daytime and evening form of instruction. There are 46 schools for children with special needs and 16 schools with evening and distance form of instruction.

⁵³ At the beginning of 2003, a survey was conducted in Tallinn in order to identify the number of non-Estonian students in Estonian-language and the results of the comparison of the data for 2003 and analogous data for 1997 show, that the movement of non-Estonian children to Estonian-language schools is a continuously growing trend. Based on official statistics the total number of pupils with non-Estonian native language in Estonian-language schools in 2004 was 4,850 (approx. 12% of all pupils with non-Estonian native language). <http://vana.hm.ee/uus/hm/client/index.php?135262301351242046>.

⁵⁴ Eesti Vabariigi haridusseadus (Republic of Estonia Education Act). 1992. <http://www.legaltext.ee/et/andmebaas/ava.asp?m=022>.

⁵⁵ In 2003, according to the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research from 3,131 graduates of Russian-language schools, 65% continued their studies on higher education level and 52% of them continued in state financed study places. In 2003/2004, 6,124 students (9.8% of total students, i.e. 62,658) in higher education institutions had Russian as their main language of instruction, 2,878 students attended public or private universities (6.3% of total students in public and private universities) and 2,457 attended applied higher education institutions (23.4% of total students).

Counties.⁵⁶ Over the last ten years, private schools with languages of instruction other than Estonian (English, Finnish) have been founded. In several schools teaching is partially conducted in a third language: Swedish, German or Hebrew. As mentioned above, Non-Estonians' Integration Foundation (MEIS) is running different programmes in the spheres of education, language learning and language immersion, new immigrants, development of social competence of ethnic minorities, support and development of cultures and languages of ethnic minorities and different public awareness campaigns about tolerance, multiculturalism and social integration.

In terms of the language of instruction and stages of education, the Estonian education system is continuously characterised by a tendency that the higher the education stage, the larger the share of Estonian language teaching. In Estonia, it is possible to acquire vocational education both on the basis of basic education and on the basis of upper secondary education in Estonian and in Russian. In Russian it is possible to study in various fields of study in 15 state vocational educational institutions, in 2 municipal vocational educational institutions and in 9 private schools. When acquiring vocational education after basic education the teaching of Estonian language is obligatory. The state examination in Estonian as the second language is also obligatory to the pupils who have acquired secondary vocational education. Several public and private higher education institutions in Estonia provide education in Russian. Some public higher vocational institutions also have specialities taught in Russian. All Russian-language students are given comprehensive instruction in Estonian, which guarantees them later equal opportunities compared with Estonian graduates on the labour market. During the first academic year, students with a mother tongue other than Estonian and insufficient knowledge of Estonian language have the right to receive during one additional academic year Estonian language training, which is also intended to familiarise them with Estonian student life and culture in general. Costs of the additional year are covered by the State (in state financed study places).

In recent years, the greatest efforts, mainly with the help of ESF funds, have been made for the development of career counselling. The results of a national career services survey conducted in 2006, however, suggest that school graduates have insufficient knowledge and skills for career planning, especially for judging their skills and abilities and knowing the labour market. Increase in the number of new immigrants from different cultural environments has caused a need to introduce adaptation training. During adaptation training a student obtains rudimentary knowledge of Estonian language enabling him/her to start studying in an Estonian language basic school; h/she will also study Estonian culture, school and Estonians' lifestyle to quicken accommodation to Estonian society.

An objective of transition to partial subject teaching in Estonian is to ensure those students who's mother tongue is not Estonian, equal possibilities for obtaining vocational and higher education and for coping in the labour market, which in turn would increase loyalty of non-Estonian population and coherence of the community. State and municipal high schools start in agreement with the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act a transition to partial instruction in Estonian in the academic year 2007/2008. The new national curriculum that will enter into force in 2007 has defined the subjects that will be gradually taught in Estonian. To guarantee a smooth transition it is important to concentrate on teacher training, elaboration of subject syllabuses and of teaching materials.

At present the preparedness of Russian-language schools for Estonian-language subject teaching, including language immersion⁵⁷, is uneven.⁵⁸ To support instruction in Estonian language in non-

⁵⁶ There are a few schools in Tartu (5), Valga (2), Võru (1), Viljandi (1), Järva (1), Jõgeva (1), Lääne (1) and Põlva (1) Counties and no Russian-language general education schools in Saare, Hiiu and Rapla Counties.

⁵⁷ Language immersion. <http://www.meis.ee/eng/immersion>; Viies, M. 2005. Report on regional and local implementation of the Estonian national action plan for social inclusion. 2005. Group of non-governmental experts in the fight against poverty and social inclusion.

⁵⁸ 27 schools have joined the language immersion programme or will join it in the next school year (2005/2006) and based on this method at least 50% of teaching will be in Estonian. The biggest problems in transition to partial Estonia language instruction are encountered in Paldiski, Maardu, in some schools in Ida-Viru County. General problems are lack of teachers, textbooks and methodological materials for Russian schools. Another obstacle is that the shortage of

Estonian language schools from academic year 2007/2008 the state and local governments are obligated to create the conditions for the transition to the Estonian-language teaching in the proportion of up to 60% of the total teaching volume. The transition to Estonian-language teaching in the Russian-language schools in the proportion of 60% will begin in the academic year 2007/2008 and the choice of subjects taught in Estonian and the division of lessons in a specific stage of study is determined by forms in the school curriculum approved by the principal of the school. The development plan of the general education system for 2007–2013 has set an objective that in 2013 in all schools with Russian as the language of instruction some subjects in the upper secondary state and municipal schools will be taught in Estonia and all teachers of non-Estonian schools who teach these subjects in Estonian will have undergone a relevant training by 2013.

Opening of the labour market will involve an increase in the mobility of Estonian population and potential arrivals of citizens of the European Union and of third countries (in 2004/2005 556 general school students went to study abroad and 49 representatives of different nations studied in Estonian general education schools on basic school level in the academic year 2005/2006, including 464 children with other than Estonian or Russian as their home language). The development plan for the general education system for 2007–2013 stipulates creating opportunities in the Estonian educational system for students with home language other than Estonian and for new immigrants for the development of their language-social readiness to enable them to cope well in school and as a member of society. It also stresses the need to support preservation of ethnic-language identity. Estonian curricula and school culture must create preconditions for understanding other cultures and religions and for a favourable attitude towards them, which is important both for continuing studies abroad as well as for students from other countries to melt into our educational system.

As a EU member state, Estonian schools are obliged to provide education to children of new immigrants – children of immigrant workers from EU countries, asylum seekers, refugees, also children of migrants from third countries who wish to begin studies in Estonian schools and who have resided in Estonia for less than three years. New immigrant parents have the option to send their children to an international private school which today exist in Tallinn and Tartu, although the tuition fee in these schools might not be affordable for many families. When deciding about choosing either Estonian or Russian language school for their children, parents are mainly interested in providing their children a good level education that in a few years would allow the child to continue his/her educational path, for example in a third country. This situation raises questions about the suitability of Estonian schools' curriculum for foreign language children. In recent years, Estonian schools have had their first experiences with newly-arrived children who do not speak the language of instruction of the school. Legislation regulating the education of minorities has until now been focused mainly on Russian-speaking minorities who have arrived in Estonia long ago. In cooperation with the Centre of Educational Programs of the MEIS (Integration Foundation CEP) and the Ministry of Education and Research several new integration projects for new immigrants have been undertaken since 2003.⁵⁹

The Estonian Public Administration Institute and the Faktum Research Centre carried out a survey *Measures of Local Governments for the Integration of the Foreign Language Population and Ways of Gauging its Effectiveness* where the reflection of this work in the documentation of local governments was studied.⁶⁰ MEIS has started a project targeted at education officials of local authorities and

teachers with a master's degree, though teachers' preparation has been and is a big priority for the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research.

⁵⁹ Uusimmigrantide lapsed Eesti hariduses. Hariduspoliitilised põhimõtted ning hariduskorraldus (New immigrant's children in Estonian education. Educational policy principles and educational organization). 2004. Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium (Estonian Ministry of Education and Research). http://www.meis.ee/pictures/Uusimmigrantide_lapsed_Hariduspoliitilised_pohimotted.pdf; special courses for teachers, study materials, new research will be carried out for mapping the preparation of local level administrations and of training needs for the admission of children of new immigrants to Estonian educational institutions.

⁶⁰ The role of local governments in the integration process. [http:// www. Meis. Ee/print.php?path=eng/measures](http://www.Meis.Ee/print.php?path=eng/measures).

principals of educational institutions to raise their competence and increase their preparation for inclusion of refugees, people under international protection and children of new immigrants into the Estonian educational system, as well as a project for conducting Estonian language and professional/advanced training for 200 non-Estonian-speaking young people (multiple risk of unemployment – aged 15-35 years, for whom finding an employment is complicated by insufficient proficiency of state language, shortage of skills and regional isolation).

2.4. Housing related issues⁶¹

In the basic social rights the Estonian Constitution⁶² is based on the minimum concept of rights and does not directly stipulate everyone's right to housing. The Constitution directly protects only the inviolability of the existing dwellings. Based on a minimum concept a person would have the right to receive food, temporary shelter and clothing as assistance. The right to housing is also related to the constitutional right to the protection of health, as unsuitable living conditions are one of the main reasons for falling ill and ill health. It is forbidden to evict from a municipal dwelling in case the local government is obliged to provide social assistance to the person living in the apartment, and the rent debt has arisen for valid reasons (families with many children and persons with disabilities are under the special care of the local governments).⁶³ The basic social rights (incl. the right to housing) are based on the principle of human dignity, which suggests that the state must guarantee decent life, and not just accommodation in a shelter (decent life is not just life on the boundaries of existential minimum).

The right to housing is realised with the mechanisms supporting the users of housing. Households in need have the right to apply for subsistence benefit covering also the housing utilities' expenses in the extent of the socially justified standard.⁶⁴ Access to subsistence benefit (to compensate housing costs), access to favourable housing loans, and access to municipal housing is not related to the citizenship status or length of time lived in Estonia. All permanent residents in Estonia have the same rights, and no additional rights apply to the Estonian citizens. The standards for housing utilities' costs are set by local governments. The socially reasonable standard size of dwellings is set by the central government and it is 18 m² of the total area of dwelling per every member of the family, plus an additional 15 m² per family. In principle, nobody should become homeless due to lack of money because the benefit is paid on the basis of bills presented before the payment date of housing expenses.

Privatisation of state housing sector⁶⁵ was carried out in extremely favourable terms to sitting tenants in Estonia. The privatisation programme, which started in 1991, included both the restitution process, i.e. the return of dwellings nationalised by the Soviet authorities to the former owners or their legal heirs, and the privatisation of dwellings in state or municipal ownership. Dwellings were mostly privatised to their sitting tenants.⁶⁶ The purchase of apartments was conducted through the privatisation vouchers,

⁶¹ Background for the housing related issues is discussed in: Viies, M. 2006. First 2006 semester report. Estonia. Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion.

⁶² Eesti Vabariigi põhiseadus (The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia). 1992. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/ert/act.jsp?id=633949>.

⁶³ Annus, T., Aaviksoo, B. 2002. Riigi, kohalike omavalitsuste, perekonna ja muude isikute kohustused põhiseaduslike õiguste tagamisel sotsiaalhoolekande valdkonnas (Obligations of the state, local municipalities, family and other persons in providing constitutional rights in the sphere social welfare). Tallinn: Sotsiaalministeerium. [http://www.sm.ee/esttxt/HtmlPages/Oigus%20sotsiaalhoolekandefinal/\\$file/Oigus%20sotsiaalhoolekandele%20final.pdf](http://www.sm.ee/esttxt/HtmlPages/Oigus%20sotsiaalhoolekandefinal/$file/Oigus%20sotsiaalhoolekandele%20final.pdf).

⁶⁴ Sotsiaalhoolekandes seadus (Social Welfare Act). 1995. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/ert/act.jsp?id=1036419>.

⁶⁵ Eluruumide erastamise seadus (Privatisation of Dwellings Act), 1993. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/ert/act.jsp?id=1036300>.

⁶⁶ A residential lease contract in force at the time of return of a residential building is deemed to be valid for three years after the transfer of the right of ownership in the residential building to the entitled subject. Upon expiry of the term of a residential lease contract, the contract is extended for five years and then again for another five years, whereas the possibilities to terminate the lease contract in the meanwhile are extremely small. Hence, the lease contracts won't end immediately upon restitution and 13 is a long period for the tenants to change their life. In case the tenant does not pay rent, but lives in a house belonging to a

which were given to all individuals who had permanently lived and worked in Estonia for at least five years, regardless of their ethnic status. Thus, households' financial resources and ethnicity did not affect their ability to privatise.

Some of the risk groups' access to home-ownership is facilitated by the housing loan policy.⁶⁷ Providing municipal housing by the local governments is one of the tools to realise the right to housing.⁶⁸ The provision of municipal housing today accounts for 4% of total housing stock. The Social Welfare Act gives vulnerable groups the right to apply for municipal housing in case the person or family is not able to ensure it for themselves; and according to the same law, vulnerable groups have the right to receive inevitable social assistance that also includes the opportunity to use temporary shelter. Social housing is meant to include a special package of social services necessary for a client's subsistence and housing service in this sense is provided mostly in some institutions (care homes, rehabilitation centres). But housing service can also be provided as a combined municipal housing and home care service; persons who receive such services usually belong to certain risk groups (e.g. disabled people, elderly). The provision and use of social housing is regulated by municipality councils on the basis of housing law⁶⁹. Every municipality can set rules about who are eligible for municipal housing.⁷⁰

When a refugee goes to live in a local municipality, the costs arising from this and the procedure is regulated by 'The Conditions and Order of Covering the Costs of a Refugee Settling down in a Local Municipality' (Government decree No 21 of 21.01.2003) and the settling down in a local municipality is organised by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Before settling down in a local municipality, the Ministry of Social Affairs shall conclude an agreement with the local municipality. Among other costs the costs to the local municipality covered by the state budget include costs incurred from renting an apartment to the refugee, repairs and most necessary furniture, costs of obtaining household appliances and equipment. Preferential is the accommodation of refugees in a social dwelling, but when it is not possible some other accommodation shall be rented for the refugee. The costs of dwelling used by the refugee shall be covered to a socially reasonable extent. Rental expenses of a larger dwelling shall be covered in case the only obstacle to admitting the refugee by the local municipality is the lack of

private owner, the law court takes clearly the position that private owner must tolerate the unpaid rent as long as the law permits that (three months in succession or three months in total). In the event of eviction the person has the right to turn to local municipality with an application to get a social apartment. As the housing stock of local municipalities is not sufficient, then such application not always has a positive result. When a person is living in a dwelling belonging to this municipality, the courts take the standpoint that the local municipality must render assistance to them and won't terminate the lease contract. According to the housing development strategy for 2003-2008, municipalities can apply for state subsidy in the extent of 50% for providing new or renovated municipal rental housing for tenants who have otherwise difficulties in reallocation from restituted housing and this is expected to bring solution for solving housing problems for this particular vulnerable group.

⁶⁷ Although the interest rates offered by commercial banks are quite favourable today, the requirement for own financing often limits risk groups' possibilities to buy housing. Young families with at least one child and young specialists (up to 30 year old) can receive housing loan from commercial banks on favourable conditions (10% own financing instead of 34% as normal in commercial banks). The same loan conditions also apply to tenants living in restituted housing. In cooperation with the foundation KredEx, which is a self-managing institution within the administrative field of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, the guarantees are provided to commercial loans for those target groups.

⁶⁸ Kohaliku omavalitsuse korralduse seadus (Local Government Organisation Act). 1993. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/ert/act.jsp?id=1048161>.

⁶⁹ Elamuseadus (Dwelling Act). 1992. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/ert/act.jsp?id=829085>.

⁷⁰ People with insufficient financial standing, as well as persons with physical disabilities or mental special needs who are otherwise unable to ensure themselves or their families with the opportunity to use housing can apply for social housing. Depending on local municipality, single mothers, families with 3 or more children, and other vulnerable groups can also be eligible for municipal housing. The rent level in municipal housing is considerably lower than in private rental market. The need for affordable municipal housing for low-income groups exceeds the existing supply, especially in the main towns. The municipal housing stock consists mostly of the residual of the housing privatisation and is mostly of low quality (often not adequate for decent living). The main clientele of this housing sector is socially vulnerable groups. In 2002, the municipality of Tallinn approved the housing programme, which aims to construct 2000 new municipal dwellings, and to renovate a part of the existing municipal housing stock during 2002-2007. The largest target group for these new and renovated apartments is formed by tenants of restituted dwellings. The state also grants subsidies to local governments for constructing municipal rented apartments.

dwelling corresponding to the standard living space. Covering of the rental costs shall be terminated when the economic situation of the refugee has improved so much that h/she himself/herself can pay for the accommodation.

There is no official reliable statistics about homeless people in Estonia and homelessness is mostly a problem in large towns, especially in the capital. According to the expert evaluation, the number of the homeless in Tallinn is nearly 2,000 or 0.5% of all inhabitants. Experts estimate the total number of homeless people in Estonia to be 3,000-5,000, or 0.3-0.4% of the population. The gender composition of the homeless (75-80% are men) is similar to that in the rest of the world. The homeless in Estonia consist mostly of lonely people who have no family or who have lost their family and close ones. All age groups of working age are represented (18-65 year); the biggest number of women with no housing is in the age group between 40-50 and men in the age group between 50-60. There is an equal number of different language groups (Estonian-speakers and Russian-speakers) among homeless compared to the population as a whole (50:50% in Tallinn) and 2/3 of the clientele of the shelters has had no place to live for a long time (over 6 months).⁷¹ There are no estimations available about the share of children and disabled people among homeless population. The policy measures such as subsistence benefit and municipal housing provision are principal measures to avoid and fight against homelessness, also in the long-term. According to the Ministry of Social Affairs, ca 80% of the total amount of subsistence benefits is paid to compensate for housing costs and in addition, additional social benefits are also paid from the means of subsistence benefit fund. Shelter and lodging services are provided primarily by voluntary organisations, which often provide social advice, catering or cooking facilities, washing facilities, also help to clients in applying for documents. The shelters or day-centres established by local municipalities for the homeless are administrated mostly by NGOs.

2.5. Social services

According to the Constitution,⁷² an Estonian citizen has the right to state assistance in the case of old age, incapacity for work, loss of a provider, or need. Pursuant to international agreements and in accordance with the Social Welfare Act,⁷³ entitled to social services⁷⁴, benefits⁷⁵ and other assistance are permanent residents of Estonia (both Estonian citizens and persons who have a permanent residence permit), other aliens living legally in Estonia (persons who have a temporary residence permit) and refugees staying in Estonia. Other people including those staying temporarily in Estonia and those staying here illegally are entitled to emergency social care. The Constitutional legal expert commission of the Republic of Estonia has found that the constitutional right is granted to the minimum for existence, meaning that the citizens have the subjective right to demand from the state in case of need a shelter and food so that they can stay alive.⁷⁶ For a decent living there has been established in addition to these services a financial assistance (subsistence benefit). In addition to financial subsistence benefit it is possible pursuant to the Social Welfare Act to pay additional social benefits and

⁷¹ Kährnik, A., Tiit, E.-M., Kõre, J., Ruoppila, S. 2003. Access to housing for vulnerable groups in Estonia. Praxis Workong Paper No 10.

⁷² Eesti Vabariigi põhiseadus (The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia). 1992. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/ert/act.jsp?id=633949>.

⁷³ Sotsiaalhoolekandes seadus (Social Welfare Act). 1995. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/ert/act.jsp?id=1036419>.

⁷⁴ The Ministry of Social Affairs in June 2006 held a public procurement to establish a data register for social services (STAR).

⁷⁵ Viies, M. 2006. First 2006 semester report. Estonia. Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion.

⁷⁶ Annus, T., Aaviksoo, B. 2002. Riigi, kohalike omavalitsuste, perekonna ja muude isikute kohustused põhiseaduslike õiguste tagamisel sotsiaalhoolekande valdkonnas (Obligations of the state, local governments, family and other persons in providing constitutional right in the sphere of social welfare). Tallinn: Sotsiaalministeerium. [http://www.sm.ee/esttxt/HtmlPages/Oigusotsiaalhoolekandefinal/\\$file/Oigus%20sotsiaalhoolekandele%20final.pdf](http://www.sm.ee/esttxt/HtmlPages/Oigusotsiaalhoolekandefinal/$file/Oigus%20sotsiaalhoolekandele%20final.pdf).

as an emergency measure there is envisaged also emergency social assistance. Emergency social assistance is provided for people who are faced with a socially helpless situation due to a loss or lack of their means of subsistence. The provision of emergency social assistance is organised by local governments. Each local government lays down in their regulation the procedure and conditions for the provision of emergency social assistance and the types of additional social benefits. Thus the services and benefits provided by local governments vary. These may include for example soup kitchens, food parcels, clothing, shelters (including for the homeless) and other monetary and non-monetary assistance (e.g. for applying for a new ID card or passport, for medications). Emergency social assistance is provided until the person is no longer in a helpless situation due to the lack or loss of his/her means of subsistence.

Citizens of Estonia and Estonians who have come to live in Estonia and their spouses, children and parents who have moved here with them and who receive social assistance also have the right to receive a monthly social benefit in the amount of the national pension if their monthly income is below the level of the national pension and if they are of the retirement age specified in the State Pension Insurance Act.⁷⁷ The said benefit is granted and paid through the local pension offices and expenses for that social benefit are covered from the state budget through the budget of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

According to the Social Welfare Act, administration of the provision of social services, emergency social assistance and other assistance, and the grant and payment of social benefits are part of the duties of local governments in administration of social welfare. The Local Government Organisation Act lays down the duties and authority of local governments which include the organisation, in the rural municipality or city, of social assistance and services, welfare services for the elderly, youth work, housing and utilities, etc. In most of the local governments, there is a standing committee on social affairs who makes decisions on social issues. Local governments provide social services and pay additional benefits from their budgets for low-income families and various risk groups. In addition to the income-based benefits, people get benefits, which do not depend on their income. The list of such benefits is approved by the council of the local government and these lists are accessible on the web pages of most of the governments.

The Social Welfare Act stipulates services associated with social adaptation problems (for the rehabilitation of young people with problems, elderly, homeless, drug addicts and minorities): social counselling, provision of prosthetic, orthopaedic and other appliances, domestic services, foster care, care and rehabilitation in social welfare institutions, other social services needed for coping. Additionally, the law provides for provision of various services for the protection of people with special social needs.

The right to medical assistance is granted by the Constitution. Corresponding to the Health Services Organisation Act⁷⁸ every person on the territory of the Republic of Estonia has the right to receive emergency care. Health care professionals are required to provide emergency care within the limits of their competence and with the means available. For the purposes of the Health Services Organisation Act, emergency care means health services, which are provided by health care professionals in situations where postponement of care or failure to provide care may cause the death or permanent damage to the health of the person requiring care. Health services are the activities of health care professionals for the prevention, diagnosis or treatment of diseases, injuries or intoxication in order to reduce the malaise of persons, prevent the deterioration of their state of health or development of the diseases, and restore their health.

Pursuant to the Refugees Act, during his or her stay in Estonia, a refugee has the right to receive state allowances, family benefits, employment services and state unemployment benefits, social benefits and other assistance on the same grounds as a permanent resident of Estonia as provided for by law and

⁷⁷ Riikliku pensionikindlustuse seadus (State Pension Insurance Act). 2001.
<https://www.riigiteataja.ee/ert/act.jsp?id=1036273>.

⁷⁸ Tervishoiuteenuste korraldamise seadus (Health Services Organisation Act). 2001.
<https://www.riigiteataja.ee/ert/act.jsp?id=965572>.

pursuant to the conditions and procedures established by the Government of the Republic of Estonia. According to current practice, corresponding to the data of the Citizenship and Migration Board, no aliens staying in the country with legal residence permit have been expelled because of the absence of income.

In case of risks (loss of a provider, unemployment, old age etc.) all these people are assisted based on the insurance or solidarity principle. Estonia has elaborated a social insurance system for payment of monetary benefits and compensations, but the system of social services still needs some improvement and elaboration to ensure subsistence to all people in need. As the provision of social welfare services and social assistance is based on the principle that assistance must be rendered as close to the place of residence of persons in need as possible and based on individual needs, then the role of local governments has been increasing in their administration and financing. As the quality of social services provided on the level of municipalities is extremely variable and does not ensure equal treatment of all at least on a minimum level, the Ministry of Social Affairs intends to specify and harmonise the minimum requirements for these services.⁷⁹ The services to be developed on local level are primarily care services, supporting services to disabled people (incl. personal assistant, special transport), supporting services to families with subsistence difficulties and supporting services to applicants for long-term social assistance, as well as development of integrated provision of care services and nursing care. Also negotiations are being held and preparations are made for the transfer of resources of subsistence benefits to local governments.

2.6. Information, communication and culture issues

Estonia has a long tradition of cultural autonomy for ethnic minorities. As early as on 12 February 1925, the Parliament passed the first Cultural Autonomy of Ethnic Minorities Act, which affirmed that the Republic of Estonia respects the right of all ethnic groups to preserve their ethnic identity, culture and religious convictions. The Estonian Cultural Autonomy of Ethnic Minorities Act was the first of its kind in the whole world and internationally recognised as a successful endeavour to protect the cultural autonomy of ethnic minorities.⁸⁰ The restoration of the Republic of Estonia in 1991, and the enactment of the new constitution in 1992 made it necessary to pass a law on the cultural autonomy of ethnic minorities, in which all the social changes that had occurred were taken into consideration.

The new Cultural Autonomy of Ethnic Minorities Act⁸¹ is grounded on the same basic ideas as that of 1925: the acceptance of ethnic minorities' right to preserve their ethnic identity, culture and language. At the same time, the Act gives the corresponding legal guarantees and guidelines. The Act defines an ethnic minority as those citizens of Estonia who reside on Estonian territory, have maintained a long and lasting attachment to the country they live in, and wish to preserve their original cultural traditions, language and religion. The right to form institutions for cultural self-government can be obtained by all those ethnic minority groups to which this right was given by the Act of 1925, and by other ethnic groups of more than 3,000 persons. Until Estonia's large non-citizen population gains citizenship step-by-step, in a lawful and orderly way, non-citizens will continue to constitute an important part of the overall population. The Act grants these people the right to participate in cultural autonomy activities, although they may not vote or be elected for the leading organs. An ethnic minority group which is entitled to cultural autonomy can, by direct and uniform elections with a secret vote, elect their own cultural council, which constitutes the highest organ of authority and representation within the frames of cultural

⁷⁹ Development Plan of the Ministry of Social Affairs for 2007-2010. 2006. Ministry of Social Affairs. <http://www.sm.ee>.

⁸⁰ The cultural autonomy of ethnic minorities in Estonia. Estonian Institute. http://www.einst.ee/factsheets/factsheets_uus_kuju/the_cultural_autonomy_of_ethnic_minorities_in_estonia.htm.

⁸¹ Vähemusrahvuse kultuuriautonomiam seadus (Estonian Cultural Autonomy of Ethnic Minorities Act). 1993. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/ert/act.jsp?id=182796>.

autonomy. The regulations for the elections to the cultural council are drafted and authorised by the Government of the Republic. This is the single function of the states' executive power in forming the institutions for cultural self-government.

The cultural autonomy organisations must base their activities on Estonian legislation and on their own regulations. The cultural council of an ethnic minority can form regional cultural boards according to their needs, appoint cultural deputies and found ethnic cultural institutions, schools, social and health care establishments, publishing houses and so on. The cultural autonomy institutions can own property and are liable for their financial obligations. Resources originate from specific allocations, partly from the state budget, partly from local budgets, as well as from membership fees and donations from enterprises, organisations and private persons. The resources are used to provide education in the mother tongue, and for scholarships and awards for promoting ethnic culture. The Cultural Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities Act is not of an obliging nature. Its purpose is to encourage ethnic minorities to make use of their constitutional rights. The task of the national authorities is to provide legal guarantees, without interfering in each ethnic group or individual's right to decide for themselves in all matters concerning preservation of their ethnic identity, cultural traditions and mother tongue.⁸²

Some of different nationalities living in Estonia are assembled into cultural societies that operate in the form of non-profit organisations. Nevertheless, only the Ingrian Finns have organised themselves by now in accordance with the Cultural Autonomy Act that provides ethno-cultural minority groups legal status, enabling them to communicate directly with the state, and also gives them the right to apply for funding for their activities from the state budget. The other national culture societies are mostly assembled in 4 associations and alliances of national culture societies.⁸³ Yet there are also national culture societies that operate outside of alliances and associations.⁸⁴

The State Programme 'Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007' includes a separate sub-programme that is dedicated to the education and culture of ethnic minorities. MEIS supports activities described in the State Programme through its competitions: the project competition for national culture societies and the project competition for Sunday schools of national culture societies. Projects submitted by national culture societies that introduce their culture to Estonians in addition to fostering their own culture receive support every year. Various approaches are selected for introducing their own culture – public events, lectures, exhibitions and seminars take place, broadcasts and information folders are prepared and homepages are created. Summer language camps for children and youth, and family exchange projects are the more well-known integration activities in Estonia.⁸⁵ Estonian society becomes more aware of cultural differences and more tolerant of different cultures through these activities.

⁸² Vähemusrahvuse kultuuriautoomia seadus (Cultural Autonomy of Ethnic Minorities Act). 1993. <http://www.riigiteataja.ee/ert/act.jsp?id=182796>.

⁸³ The International Association of Alliances of National Cultures (Lüüra, 31 societies), the Alliance of Nationalities of Estonia (20 societies), the Association of Slavic Educational and Charitable Societies in Estonia (42 societies and 33 collectives), and the Eastern Viru County Round Table of National Culture Societies (18 societies), an umbrella organisation of national culture societies operating in Eastern Viru County.

⁸⁴ Ethnic minorities and national culture in Estonia. 2006. <http://www.meis.ee/eng/minorities>.

⁸⁵ The primary aim of these projects is that children or youths (aged 7-17) of foreign language backgrounds living in Estonia could practice and supplement their knowledge of Estonian through direct communication with Estonians of their own age, live in an Estonian family and familiarise themselves with the living conditions of Estonians and with Estonian culture, yet at the same time to introduce their own culture. A language camp is a special camp for non-Estonian and Estonian youth, with the aim of lowering linguistic and cultural barriers, developing communicative skills and raising motivation and interest in learning the Estonian language. The aim of language practice in the summer is to provide young people the opportunity to supplement their knowledge of the Estonian language in an environment outside the school. The MEIS has supported Estonian language camp and family exchange projects since 1998, in which nearly 14,000 children and youths have participated. Both the government of Estonia and foreign financiers have provided funding for this: Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Great Britain and the European Union. Language camp differs from ordinary camps primarily in that everything that takes place during 12 days serves the objective of language learning; generally speaking, everyone (including camp personnel) communicates with the campers in Estonian. In addition to foreign-language children, support pupils (Estonian children) definitely participate in the camp and they have the important role of supporting the foreign-language children. Everyone who comes to the camp

Studies by the Department of Journalism and Communication, University of Tartu on the use of media by non-Estonians have suggested that in principle, there are separate communication communities in Estonia where Russian-speaking community is watching mostly Russian, including from Russia. A policy analysis of the role of public media in the development of a common public sphere concerned mostly the Russian language programmes offered by Estonian media. Also, various studies have been conducted to investigate the content of Estonian and Russian language media, including media monitoring of integration by order of MEIS. Comparisons of the media situations at the beginning and mid-1990s indicate that the Estonian media has grown more tolerant in its discussions of non-Estonians integration and pragmatic – integration is in the interests of Estonian society. There are less clearly hostile and disdainful attitudes towards non-Estonian speaking people.

The Multicultural Estonia foreign aid project operating in affiliation with the MEIS supported the preparation and broadcast of radio programmes in the languages of minority nationalities over the course of two years.⁸⁶ During different periods, the production of Byelorussian-language and Ukrainian-language cultural and children's programmes received support. Similarly, a series of programmes for the Jewish community was produced, in which three languages were spoken – Yiddish, Hebrew and Russian because precisely these three languages are used the most in the community. Radio 4, the Russian-language channel of Estonian Radio, was the partner of the MEIS in the production and broadcast of all radio programmes.

2.7. Emigration

In Estonia, the common assumption is that until the average EU living standard is achieved, emigration will outpace immigration with income differences between geographically close and culturally similar EU Member States being the most significant migration factor.⁸⁷ From the accession to the EU in May 2004, the labour markets of the United Kingdom, Ireland and Sweden were fully open to the Estonian people. The rest of the Member States maintained restrictions during the transfer period to a bigger or lesser extent. Starting from May 2006, the restrictions for Estonian citizens to find employment in Finland, Spain and Portugal were removed and restrictions in several countries have been alleviated.

According to the Ministry of Social Affairs, only countries of destination collect data on labour mobility. Estonia as a country of origin has no legal basis to register or to check people going to work abroad. The government cabinet in September 2006 decided to work out a plan to keep account of outmigrant and immigrant workers in Estonia. Today the estimated number of people working outside Estonia according to the Minister of Economic Affairs is 10,000-20,000 to 60,000-70,000, with the precision that one-fourth is working in Finland and many of them are doctors, nurses, builders, not to speak of bus and car drivers.⁸⁸ The only expectation is medical personnel with more information on their mobility. According to the Health Care Board, from February 2004 till June 2006, 800 medical workers left Estonia (including 60% to Finland, 10% Sweden and 12% to the United Kingdom). Most of them are valuable specialists. A study of the migration of medical personnel conducted in 2004 indicated that approximately 5% of the medical personnel had a definite plan to work abroad and the main reason of

knows what to expect and wants to learn Estonian or to help their companions in learning it. In a family exchange project, non-Estonian young people can spend an average of one week to two months in an Estonian family and actively take part in their daily life. Family exchange can be referred to as individual language training in a direct language environment and this is suitable for more reserved children. Estonian-language camps and family study model. <http://www.meis.ee/eng/extracurricular>.

⁸⁶ Television and radio broadcasts. <http://www.meis.ee/eng/socialcompetenc/TVradio>.

⁸⁷ Soosaar, O. 2005. Estonian population and employment – projection for the next half-century. Bank of Estonia. *Kroon&Economy*, No 2. http://www.eestipank.info/pub/en/dokumentid/publikatsioonid/seeriad/kroon_majandus/_2005_2/_1.pdf?objld=653445.

⁸⁸ Jakobson, K. 2006. Savisaar: sihiks on Soome palgatase (Savisaar: target at the Finnish wage level). *Äripäev*, 2 November.

migration was the expected higher wages and better working conditions, the main obstacles were family and home in Estonia.⁸⁹

Based on the data collected by the Ministry of Social Affairs on work permits issued to Estonian citizens by relevant agencies of other Member States, it may be summarised that since May 2004 16,928 workers⁹⁰ left to work abroad (Finland 7,072 (in 2004-2005), United Kingdom 4,680, Ireland 2,861, Sweden 1,357, Norway 678, Spain 280). In addition, within the free movement of services employees were sent to work abroad, mostly to Finland (1,882 in 2004 and 6,200 in 2005); thus, since the accession, 2.6% of the labour force have worked abroad, or 3.8 including those sent on business.⁹¹

Decrease in unemployment, but also increase in the number of people working abroad has involved shortage of workforce and fast growth of wages in some sectors. In general, an overall opinion is that the deficit of specialists can be alleviated with a wage growth that would attract Estonians back home.

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⁸⁹ Võrk, A., Priinits, M., Kallaste, E. 2004. Tervishoiutöötajate migratsioon Eestis: migratsiooni potentsiaalne suurus, mõju tervishoiutöötajate vajadusele ja poliitikavalikud (Migration of medical personnel in Estonia: potential extent of migration, impact on the need for medical personnel and policy choices). PRAXISe Toimetised No. 18.

⁹⁰ Data are still approximate as these do not cover all the countries worldwide, there is no data on how long people with working or residence permit actually work abroad or how many of them have returned; for working over a short period a work or residence permits are frequently not required, some people work unregistered and thus are not included in statistics. According to the data of the Estonian Labour Force Survey, 5,985 employees worked abroad in 2004.

⁹¹ Soosaar, O., Viilmann, N., Kaasik, Ü. 2006. Labour Market Review. Bank of Estonia. http://www.eestipank.info/pub/en/dokumentid/publikatsioonid/seeriad/muud_uuringud/tooturg_406.pdf?objld=877022.

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Priority Objective 8 of the NRP: Increase in labour supply (from state budget incl structural funds 1162 million EEK in 2005-2006, 667 million EEK in 2007)												
Input or Output targets	Indicators to measure progress in 2008		Policy Measures									
			Employment	Economic	Income: tax, social protection	Education & Training (incl. ICT)	Housing, Environment & Basic Services	Health & Social/Family Services	Culture, Sport & Leisure	Transport	Financial & Legal Services	Non Discrimination and Gender Equality
Number of long-term unemployed Share of registered unemployed participating in active labour market measures Share of participants of training courses finding the job Employment rate of disabled persons Employment rate (15-64) Employment rate of women (15-64) Employment rate of older people (55-64) Activity rate Long-term unemployment rate Average living expectancy Lost workdays due to work accidents Number of work accidents resulting in death per 100,000 workers	18,500	<i>Key Existing measures</i>	case management networks									evaluation of the effectiveness of the social welfare system
	22%		<i>Main New measures</i>	basic working skills training for unemployed, work based training for youth; employers' consultation service; mapping of the risk groups	connection effectively participation in social measures and active labour market measures	basic training programmes for case management in social work speciality of the university level; supplementary training programmes for case management networks' members; vocational and rehabilitation system for disabled; training for social workers; training of childcare providers and counselling on business start-up	tailor-made social welfare services for disabled	fostering the childcare system; health insurance for participants in work based training; reducing premature illness and death		transport allowance for participants in work based training	adaptation the national public employment service system; information system of labour policy statistics; follow-up evaluation of employment services; register of social services STAR; database of providers of childcare services; improvement of statistics on immigration and emigration	
	65%											
	30%											
	69%											
	66.9%											
	63.4%											
73.1%	<i>Additional resources</i>											
2.7%												
men 67, women 78	<i>How do these measures address gender inequalities?</i>	Is not addressed		Is not addressed	Is not addressed	Is not addressed	Is not addressed		Is not addressed	Is not addressed		
137,000												
4.7	<i>Agencies responsible for delivery (national, regional, local)</i>	Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour Market Board, local departments of this board, partners (employers)										