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Estonia

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I. Methodology

1. This report for the second universal periodic review (UPR) has been compiled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in accordance with the Human Rights Council guidelines. It is based on Estonian national reports on implementing human rights instruments, national action plans and policies on human rights and their implementation reports, as well as inputs provided by government agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The report covers the human rights developments that have received attention in the recent years.
2. The report follows the first UPR which took place in 2011 and the report on the implementation of the accepted recommendations, which Estonia submitted in March 2014.
3. The report was sent for feedback to NGOs dealing with human rights in Estonia and was also published on the Governmental Information System for Draft Legislation where it was accessible to the general public in accordance with the principle of inclusion.

II. Promotion and protection of human rights

A. Developments in the normative framework since the previous review

International treaty commitments

4. Since the first UPR in 2011, Estonia has become party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2012), the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (OP-CRPD, 2012) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OP-CRC-AC, 2014). Estonia ratified the Kampala Amendments to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in 2013. As of 1 June 2015, Estonia is a party to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. On 2 December 2014, Estonia signed the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention).
5. Estonia has not submitted reservations to the human rights instruments referred to above.
6. Estonia complies with the European Convention on Human Rights and abides by all final judgments of the European Court of Human Rights rendered in respect to Estonia.
7. Estonia is a member of the Human Rights Council in 2012–2015. The priorities of Estonia in human rights include: the rights of women and children, consideration of the gender perspective in conflict situations (UN Security Council Resolution 1325), fight against impunity, protection of the rights of indigenous peoples, freedom of expression (including internet freedom) and strengthening the civil society.

B. Developments in the institutional framework since the previous review

National institution for the protection of human rights

8. Establishing the national institution for the protection of human rights (NHRI) is on the agenda of the authorities and Estonia is looking for the best solution to the NHRI in accordance with the Constitution. Until establishing the NHRI, the institution of the Chancellor of Justice observes and ensures the application of international human rights norms in Estonia in the best possible manner, as it covers most of the functions of the

NHRI and largely follows the Paris Principles. This institution was established under the Constitution and the Chancellor is guided only by legislation regulating his or her activities, other legal provisions and his or her conscience. The Chancellor has several legal guarantees to ensure his or her independence, including the prohibition to hold any other state or local government office or an office of a legal person in public law during the term of office. The Chancellor's duties are to ensure that the legislation valid in Estonia is constitutional and that the fundamental rights and freedoms of the people are protected. The Chancellor of Justice is not part of the legislative, executive or judicial powers; it is not a political or a law enforcement body and is not subordinate to any national official or state authority.

Ombudsman for children

9. Estonia created the position of Ombudsman for Children on 19 March 2011. The duties of the Ombudsman are carried out by the Chancellor of Justice. The Children's Rights Department of the Office of the Chancellor of Justice performs the everyday functions of the Ombudsman.

Gender Equality Council

10. In October 2013, Estonian government established the Gender Equality Council, set forth in the Gender Equality Act and functioning as an advisory body to the government. Its responsibilities are advising the Government in matters related to strategies for the promotion of gender equality, approving general objectives of gender equality policy and presenting opinions to the Government concerning the compliance of national programmes with the obligation of gender mainstreaming. Among the 22 members of the Council there are representatives of institutions and NGOs working with gender equality, universities and political parties.

Independent monitoring mechanism of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

11. In 2015, preparations started to nominate the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner for the independent monitoring mechanism pursuant to Article 33 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including amendments in legislation and allocation of resources. Until the enforcement of relevant amendments the Commissioner performs the monitoring tasks under contract with the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Ministers in charge of human rights issues

12. In the 2014 government reform process, the portfolio of the Minister of Social Affairs was reorganised and two new ministerial positions were created – the Minister of Social Protection and the Minister of Health and Labour. No new structures were created as they share the Ministry of Social Affairs. Highlighting different aspects of state social affairs agenda in such a way proved successful, therefore after the 2015 elections, the new government continues this division of responsibility in the field of social affairs.

13. The Minister of Foreign Trade and Entrepreneurship at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications has the task to develop new initiatives for the implementation of principles and standards of Corporate Social Responsibility in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. An increasing number of businesses participate in Estonian Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility Index, compiled by Estonian Corporate Responsibility Forum.

III. Implementation of human rights

A. Democracy, freedom of speech, freedom of association

Best practice of inclusion

14. The goal of inclusion is to increase the transparency of decision-making and the trustworthiness of the public sector. Ministries must include stakeholders into preparation of legislation, present a draft to them for opinions and provide feedback about taking into account the opinions gathered. For better inclusion of partners, an Inclusion Handbook was prepared for officials and NGOs and everyone can participate in the decision-making process through the Governmental Information System for Draft Legislation.

Use of rights on internet – i-voting

15. Estonia is the first country in the world to introduce nation-wide Internet voting. In 2005 the system was used for the first time for local government council elections. Electronic voting takes place during advance polls (tenth to fourth day before election day) and government-issued ID-cards are used for voter identification.

16. Since 2007 it is possible to vote online for parliamentary elections. The i-voting system is gaining popularity. In 2014 European Parliament elections, a third of voters participated in elections over the Internet from 98 countries. In 2015 Parliamentary Elections 30.5% of voters participated over the Internet from 116 countries. Internet voting supplements, not replaces, the traditional methods of voting.

17. Estonia takes the security of Internet voting seriously. Voting over Internet is as secure as ballot voting, as technical, administrative, legal and other measures safeguard the integrity of the system and most importantly the security and secrecy of the votes. Since the 2011 parliamentary elections it is also possible to use a mobile phone to identify oneself for i-voting.

The right to commemorate historical events and the right of assembly

18. Everyone has the constitutional right, without prior permission, to assemble peacefully and to conduct meetings. This right may be restricted in cases and pursuant to the procedure provided by law to ensure national security, public order, morals, traffic safety and the safety of participants in meetings, or to prevent the spread of an infectious disease. The Law Enforcement Act stipulates the right to hold spontaneous assemblies, stating that no advance notice of spontaneous assemblies is required. Communication between the organisers of an assembly and state and/or local authorities is possible online; thus there is no necessity to be personally present at authorities to submit written forms or applications or pay state fees.

B. Right to life and security of a person

Illegal termination of pregnancy

19. The Penal Code has a division concerning illegal termination of pregnancy, containing different offences – termination of a pregnancy against the will of the pregnant woman; termination of a pregnancy at the request of the pregnant woman by a person without the legal right to terminate pregnancy; termination of the pregnancy of a woman by a person with the right to terminate pregnancy at the request of the pregnant woman later than permitted by law.

20. The Termination of Pregnancy and Sterilisation Act was adopted in 1998. A woman's pregnancy may only be terminated at her own request. Only gynaecologists have the right to terminate pregnancy. The Act was amended in 2015 to create additional safeguards for preserving life and providing additional guarantees to specify the woman's request and termination of the pregnancy of a woman with restricted active legal capacity.

The Penal Code's protection of the right to life

21. Estonia has abolished the death penalty.

22. Offences against life are described in a special division of the Penal Code. Statistics for manslaughter are in decline (81 in 2011, 59 in 2012, 50 in 2013 and 42 in 2014). Murder has been registered at approximately the same level (19 in 2011, 21 in 2012, 12 in 2013 and 13 in 2014). Both infanticide and manslaughter in provoked state have been registered only twice since 2011. Killing through negligence has been registered as follows: 77 in 2011, 76 in 2012, 69 in 2013 and 58 in 2014.

Prison crime

23. Crime in prisons has become less violent. A change in the strategy and tactics of prison accommodation contributed to the decrease of violence. In 2011, manslaughter was registered once, followed by a conviction. There was a case of attempted murder in prison in 2012; a person was convicted. During 2013 and 2014, no cases of manslaughter, murder or attempted murder were registered. One case of negligent manslaughter is being investigated at the moment. There were altogether 8 deaths of prisoners during 2014: one suicide, six evident cases of health problems; one death is being investigated as suspicious.

Firearms control in Estonia

24. For better safeguarding of the right to life, the Weapons Act provides strict regulations for the handling of weapons and ammunition, the grant of permissions for weapons and ammunition to be used for civilian purposes, the use of weapons and ammunition for civilian purposes, and the removal of weapons and ammunition from civilian use, the requirements for firing ranges, and state supervision. Yet 2014 unfortunately brought the first case of school shootout when a 15 year old student stole his father's firearm and shot his teacher during the lesson. This sad case underpinned the need for prevention, as well as security training and psychological support. Amendment of the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act and Vocational Educational Institutions Act will provide school employees with the necessary guarantees for using reasonable measures to prevent danger without necessarily involving the police.

C. Discrimination, racism, xenophobia

Equal Treatment Act

25. To raise awareness of the Equal Treatment Act and the principles of non-discrimination, the Ministry of Social Affairs has been co-financing the European Commission PROGRESS programme "Diversity Enriches" project of Tallinn Technical University since 2010. The project tackles all grounds of discrimination named in the Act. The "Diversity Enriches" has been focusing on diversity management in employment since 2013 with special attention on problems of homophobia, people with disabilities and elderly.

Same-sex couples and the Registered Partnership Act

26. The Registered Partnership Act was adopted by the Riigikogu in 2014 and will enter into force on 1 January 2016. The Act provides that partnership may be registered between two persons of whom at least one has residence in Estonia, making same-sex partnership legitimate. A partnership contract must be attested by notary public. Details of the registered partnership contract shall be entered in the population register and the proprietary relationship chosen shall be entered in the proprietary relationship register.

27. The Registered Partnership Act requires parties who have registered a partnership contract to support and maintain each other. Registered partners have equal rights and duties with respect to each other. A partnership, registered in a foreign state is valid in Estonia in accordance with the Private International Law Act.

Incitement to hatred

28. Incitement to hatred, violence or discrimination on the basis of nationality, race, colour, sex, language, origin, religion, sexual orientation, political opinion, financial or social status has been criminalised, but the legislation needs further amendment.

29. The planned amendments to section 151 of the Penal Code criminalise the inciting of hatred or violence against a person or a group of persons on the grounds of his or her citizenship, nationality, race, physical characteristics, health status, sex, language, origin, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs or proprietary or social status in a manner endangering public order. The motive of hatred will be an aggravating circumstance in all offences.

D. Torture, inhuman and degrading treatment

Prevention of abuse by officials

30. The definition provided by Article 1 of the Convention against Torture was used for the amendment to the Penal Code that entered into force on 1 January 2015. The former offence of torture was incorporated into a different section as an aggravated form of physical abuse. Forms of abuse by officials that do not qualify as torture continue to be prosecuted as “Abuse of authority”, “Unlawful interrogation” or “Unlawful treatment of a prisoner”.

31. A victim of brutality or excessive use of force by law enforcement personnel can make a complaint to the police and the Prosecutor’s Office. In 2013, 34 and in 2014, 16 cases of abuse of authority were registered. During 2013 and 2014, no cases of unlawful interrogation or unlawful treatment of prisoner were registered.

32. The Chancellor of Justice visits police stations and detention facilities to prevent abuse and brutality. Under the mandate provided by the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, the Chancellor of Justice visits guarded facilities at least once every three years. Extraordinary visits take place as needed, mainly after the Chancellor of Justice has received information about an abuse incident.

33. Based on the results of inspection visits, the Chancellor has made several proposals and recommendations to the respective authorities (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, Police and Border Guard Board, prisons, etc.), mostly related to material conditions and medical services in closed institutions.¹ The conditions of detention in prison and police facilities have improved because of modern prison and police buildings opened in recent years and due to the reduced number of prisoners.

Treatment of prisoners

34. Healthcare in prisons constitutes a part of the national healthcare system. Medical officers of prisons are required to supervise the state of prisoners' health on a constant basis, treat them in prison to the extent possible and, if necessary, refer them to treatment at relevant providers of specialised medical care. The availability of emergency care is guaranteed to prisoners for 24 hours a day.

35. Medicinal products and medical devices are available to all prisoners according to their needs. The Health Board supervises the healthcare providers in prisons. Prison medical units are properly licensed. Dental care for prisoners is provided by the state.

36. Rehabilitation service for imprisoned disabled persons is granted according to the general principles of rehabilitation service arrangements and delivered through the Estonian Social Insurance Board.

37. In order for the detainee to merge into society with as little difficulty as possible, several preparations are carried out prior to the release. The most common are to offer social aid to the detainee and to transfer the detainee to an open prison. A social worker will help the detainee establish contacts with the family and the social welfare agency. Upon release, the detainee will receive the release support that has accumulated from the wages for his/her work.

38. A database concerning prisoners, detained persons and persons in custody includes different kind of personal data. The Ministry of Justice regularly monitors the use of the database and turns the attention of prison managers to shortcomings in documents or in the database. Estonian authorities deem such a database necessary and very important. Regular monitoring of officers' compliance with the documentation requirements is ensured.

39. Every incident of the use of force is thoroughly investigated and if necessary, disciplinary or criminal proceedings are initiated. For example in 2013, 76 disciplinary proceedings in different circumstances were conducted. In 26 cases, officers were reprimanded or sanctioned with their basic salary being reduced by up to 30% for up to six months.

Detention conditions and overcrowding

40. Measures are taken to provide detention conditions that respect the prisoners' human dignity and do not subject them to inhuman and degrading treatment. Efforts are made to achieve at least four square meters of living space for every detainee. This requirement has been met at the new Viru and Tartu Prisons. The building of new Tallinn Prison and Detention Centre is in the planning phase; premises will be built in the close vicinity of Tallinn. There will be 600 places in rooms for up to two inmates in the new Tallinn Prison; the Detention Centre will accommodate 256 persons.

41. An amendment to the Imprisonment Act prohibits overcrowding in prisons and stipulates that the number of prisoners in a prison should not exceed the maximum number of prisoners established for the prison. Prison population has decreased slowly yet constantly: there were 2,645 inmates and 754 persons in custody in 2011; 2,307 inmates and 614 in custody in 2014 and a total of 2,726 prisoners and detainees in custody in October 2015.

42. Harku-Murru Prison, currently used for female inmates, will be closed and the inmates relocated to the new Tallinn Prison. There will be a special unit for female prison population and special conditions for female prisoners will be maintained.

43. To facilitate social rehabilitation of prisoners, Estonia operates 3 open prisons, including the new open prison in Tartu with 60 places. Open prisons mostly accommodate

prisoners who are in the final phase of their imprisonment and have shown good conduct and readiness to evolve into responsible members of the society, and prisoners, convicted for lesser crimes. There were 206 inmates in open prisons, 7.3% of all prisoners in April 2015.

E. Gender equality and the rights of women, combating domestic violence

Spouses of self-employed workers

44. In August 2012, the legislation was changed to provide a spouse engaged in the activities of the business of a self-employed worker with the same social protection as the self-employed worker. To receive this social protection, the self-employed worker has to register his or her spouse as a spouse engaged in the business activities of the self-employed worker in the register of taxable persons and pay social tax for the spouse.

Paternity leave

45. From January 2013, remuneration on the basis of fathers' average wage was reinstated for a 10-working-day paternity leave that can be taken during the two months before the estimated date of birth and during the two months after the birth of the child. The aim of this measure is to encourage more active fatherhood. It is additional to the general parental leave, which is accessible to both parents.

Insurance Activities

46. Changes made to the Insurance Activities Act that came into force in May 2013 permit an insurance undertaking, in the assessment of insured risks in sickness insurance, to take into account the risks that are characteristic only to men or women and to differentiate, if necessary, to the extent of the specified risks the insurance premiums and insurance indemnities of women and men. Neither pregnancy nor maternity shall affect the size of the insurance premiums and indemnities.

Women's military service

47. The attitude towards women's compulsory military service is generally favourable. Women in active duty and specialty areas represented 11% of the military in 2014. Women have served in the military since its initial conception. As of 1 April 2013, the new Military Service Act states that women can serve in the conscript service and have a career in the military on equal terms with men. Women have the right to abandon conscript service within 90 days of entering the service. As it is a new initiative, the Minister of Defence has determined that Defence Forces receive 25 female conscripts per year on average (the number of all conscripts per year is 3,200). Depending on the number of applications and infrastructure opportunities, the numbers may increase.

Gender pay gap

48. In September 2011, the Riigikogu proposed the Government to prepare an action plan to reduce the gender pay gap in Estonia. The action plan was prepared by the Ministry of Social Affairs and approved by the Government in July 2012. The plan is based on the assumption that the causes behind the gender pay gap in Estonia are diverse. There are five objectives set in the action plan: 1) improving the implementation of the existing Gender Equality Act (e.g. improvement of the collection of statistics, awareness raising, supporting the work of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner, etc.); 2) improving the possibilities of reconciling work, family and private life (e.g. activities targeting employers); 3) gender mainstreaming, especially in education; 4) reducing gender

segregation; 5) analysing the organisational practices and pay systems in the public sector, improving the situation where necessary.

Work-life balance

49. The need and options for supporting a notable change in sharing care responsibilities between women and men has been addressed in a Green Paper on family benefits, services and parental leave, discussed by the previous Government at the beginning of 2015. Policy recommendations of the paper suggested giving more choice to parents with regard to length and compensation of the parental leave, thereby supporting flexible return to work. Policy proposals based on the Green Paper will be submitted to the Government in spring 2016.

50. Two larger projects and additional small-scale projects implemented under the Norway Grants 2009-2014 programme “Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance” aim to improve possibilities for reconciling work and family life. A project implemented by the Responsible Business Forum targets mainly employers. The second project, implemented by the Tallinn University of Technology, aims to create a mechanism for providing efficiency and equity in matching kindergartens and children.

Gender equality in education

51. In August 2014, the Government approved amendments to the national curricula of basic and upper secondary schools which inter alia enhanced the promotion of gender equality at these school levels, including tuition of social subjects, career planning, technology and handicraft.

52. According to a Regulation of the Minister of Education and Research, study literature must be based on the core values established in the national curriculum, whereas it must take into account the principle of multiculturalism and avoid stereotypes that incite gender based, nation based, religious, cultural or racial prejudice.

53. Two projects, implemented under the Norway Grants 2009-2014 programme “Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance” by the Estonian Women’s Associations Roundtable and the Praxis Centre for Policy Studies, aim to integrate gender equality issues into higher education curricula, including teacher training.

Tackling gender stereotypes

54. In 2013, in the framework of Estonian European Social Fund programme “Promoting Gender Equality 2011-2013”, the Ministry of Social Affairs carried out an awareness raising campaign to tackle gender stereotypes and demonstrate their negative influence on work and career choices and people’s lives. The main activities were career days for boys and girls, a widely noticed series of video clips and several PR-initiatives.

Gender mainstreaming

55. A project “Mainstreaming gender perspective into state budget” was carried out from October 2010 to April 2012 within the framework of the EUPROGRESS Programme (2007–2013) in co-operation of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner, to train the employees of ministries and government agencies in gender budgeting and to compile a gender budgeting manual for the public sector.

56. The guideline “Horizontal issues in development plans” was published in May 2014. The Ministry of Finance co-ordinated the preparation of this guideline, which provides support to officials preparing development plans or planning the use of European Structural

and Investment Funds in taking into account the horizontal issues, including “equal opportunities”, under which the issue of gender equality is foreseen as a sub-issue.

57. Another project implemented under the Norway Grants 2009-2014 programme is carried out by the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner in 2013-2016 and aims to promote gender equality through empowerment, awareness raising and gender mainstreaming through two sets of activities. The first set aims to increase the effectiveness of legal protection against gender based discrimination by raising rights awareness and helping victims of discrimination directly through strategic litigation and by increasing the capacity of officials assisting discrimination victims. The second set of activities concerns intensified promotion of gender equality and enhancement of mainstreaming gender into policies and practises.

Welfare Development Plan 2016-2023

58. In July 2014, the Government tasked the Ministry of Social Affairs with preparing a development and action plan in employment, social protection, inclusion and equal opportunities for 2016-2023. The purpose of this plan is to create a strategic approach and develop measures and activities that support the independent coping of people; create equal opportunities to participate in the society and labour market; and promote gender equality in all fields of life. It targets equal economic independence of women and men, balanced participation of women and men in all levels of decision-making and management in politics and public and private sectors, reducing negative impact of gender stereotypes on decisions and everyday life, enhancing rights protection concerning equal treatment of women and men, and ensuring the institutional capacity to promote gender equality.

Tackling discrimination

59. In 2014, the Ministry of Social Affairs started amendment of the Equal Treatment Act (ETA) to improve protection against discrimination. The current law divides the areas protected against discrimination on the ground of discrimination. It covers discrimination based on religion or belief, age, disability and sexual orientation only in the area of employment, while discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin and colour is additionally covered in the areas of education, services and social security. The planned amendment will also extend protection against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief, age, disability and sexual orientation to education, access to goods and services and social protection.

60. Due to adoption of the directive 2014/54/EU on 16 April 2014 by the European Parliament and the Council on measures facilitating the exercise of rights conferred on workers in the context of freedom of movement for workers to ensure the better application at national level of EU citizens' right to work in another Member State, amendments are planned to the ETA. „EU citizenship“ as a protected ground of discrimination, will be included in the ETA which also allows the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner to act as a national body to provide support and legal assistance to EU migrant workers with the enforcement of their rights.

Additional protection in the Penal Code for vulnerable individuals

61. Pursuant to an amendment to the Penal Code, in force since 1 January 2015, aggravating circumstances are inter alia commission of the offence knowingly against a person who is: less than eighteen years of age, pregnant, in an advanced age, in need of assistance or has a severe mental disorder, in a service or financially dependent relationship with the offender and against a former or current family member of the offender, against a person who lives with the offender or is otherwise in a family relationship with the offender; and against the person by an adult in the presence of a minor as stipulated by the Penal Code.

Support of domestic violence victims

62. Victims of domestic violence are able to use the national victim support system pursuant to the Victim Support Act. There are also 14 women's shelters (13 special women's shelters run by NGOs and 1 mother-child shelter), financed from the state budget since 2013, which give women flexible support, including psychological, social and legal counselling, information about services provided by various agencies and accommodation.

Prevention of sexual violence

63. Estonian Women's Associations Roundtable conducted empowerment training for girls aged 14–17 during 2010–2012. Topics such as sexual health, gender roles, sexual self-determination and gender equality were discussed.

64. Sexual violence is one of the focuses of the awareness raising project "Bringing up a violence free generation", implemented in co-operation of the Ministries of Justice, Social Affairs and the Interior, the Police and Border Guard Board, the Estonian Women's Associations Roundtable Foundation and the Association of Estonian Open Youth Centres.

65. Ministry of Justice through National Crime Prevention Council supported the implementation of 2 NGO projects in 2015, focusing on the prevention of sexual abuse and violence against children. As a result of the projects an illustrated audio book for children will be produced and training will be organised for kindergarten teachers, adults and children in Southern Estonia. A report of the study on the prevalence of sexual abuse among children and youth will be published early 2016.

Training of law enforcement officials on domestic violence

66. Training seminars on family violence for police, prosecutors and judges specialised in domestic violence issues have been conducted. In 2011, 8 trainings for 141 police officers, 10 trainings for 240 officers in 2012 and 7 trainings for 100 officers in 2013 were conducted on the procedures in case of domestic violence. Since 2012, the Police and Border Guard Board has organised awareness days for networking in dealing with domestic violence cases for local police officers, prosecutors, municipal authorities, victim support, shelters and health institutions. 8 seminars have been organised and 260 persons from different institutions have participated as of 2013.

Preventing and tackling violence against women

67. Combating domestic violence and violence against women, including trafficking, is a Government priority. In 2012–2016, the Ministry of Social Affairs is co-ordinating the implementation of a Norway Grants programme concerning violence against women. Its aim is to prevent and tackle gender-based violence and support victims of trafficking by creating bases for more systematic structures and training relevant specialists.

68. Emergency calls about domestic violence are serviced as a first priority. Since autumn 2010, police officials have a regulation on how to treat victims of domestic violence, investigate and record cases of domestic violence (renewed in October 2012).

69. The Government adopted a new development Plan for Preventing Violence for 2015-2020 in February 2015, and it continues with the same priorities as the previous Plan for 2010–2014. Campaigns have been organised, focusing on domestic and gender violence, to implement the policy of awareness-raising.

70. To better address the challenges of reducing violence, a special network of civil servants and NGOs was created for each area of the development plan for 2010-2014 which also continues under the new plan for 2015-2020. The areas are violence against children; violence committed by minors; domestic violence, including violence against women and

trafficking in human beings, including prostitution. Close co-operation between governmental and third sector is a proven way to address domestic and gender violence issues.

F. The rights of the child

Child Protection Act

71. The new Child Protection Act, adopted in 2014, will enter into force on 1 January 2016. It prohibits all kinds of violence against a child, including corporal punishment. The main focus is on prevention, early intervention, cross-sectoral cooperation and the provision of effective child protection services.

Increased subsistence benefit for children

72. The amount of subsistence benefit to families is based on the subsistence level fixed at the national level and depends on family size. In 2015 the subsistence level for minors increased to an amount equal to the subsistence level of a single person or the first member of the family. Since 2013, local governments grant and pay (in addition to other state family benefits) state financed needs-based family benefit to families with children who receive subsistence benefit or whose income is below the income threshold for needs-based family benefit (established with the state budget for each year).

Provisions concerning minors in the Penal Code

73. The Penal Code sets out offences against children and offences committed by minors as punishable pursuant to criminal procedure whereas provisions concerning child protection and victim support exist in other instruments. It includes specific provisions concerning minors within different divisions (offences against sexual self-determination) and also a specific division for offences against minors within the chapter that deals with offences against family and minors. The Code enables better social rehabilitation and thereby prevention – for example a court may release an offender on parole if the offender was younger than eighteen years of age at the time of commission of the criminal offence, impose supervisory requirements and obligations and foresee sanctions for failure to comply.

Limited capacity of minors aged 15–17 to marry

74. Persons under 18 years of age have restricted active legal capacity and, therefore, in general they are not permitted to enter into legal transactions. However, a court may extend the restricted active legal capacity of a minor of at least 15 years of age if this is in the interests of the minor and the level of development of the minor so permits, specifying the transactions which the minor is independently permitted to enter into. The court can extend the active legal capacity of a person of at least 15 years of age for the contraction of marriage.

75. In more recent legislation, the minimum age of 18 has been followed. Gender neutral Registered Partnership Act prohibits expressis verbis the right of a minor to conclude such partnership.

G. Trafficking in human beings

Legislation on human trafficking

76. Estonia has not adopted a special act on combating human trafficking; in addition to the provisions in the Penal Code, provisions relevant to human trafficking are stipulated in the Code of Criminal Procedure, Victim Support Act and other acts. Since April 2013, the victim support services provided by the Victim Support Act are also provided to human trafficking victims, including child victims.

Development plan and programs against trafficking

77. Combating human trafficking is a Government priority. A development plan against trafficking was implemented until 2009; since then, combating human trafficking has been co-ordinated through the Development Plans for Reducing Violence for 2010–2014 and 2015–2020. The plans pay highest attention to threats to the most vulnerable target groups – women and children – and also risk factors that are often related to one another.

78. The Ministry of Justice is the national co-ordinator on the matter and provides information on human trafficking.² The Ministry co-operates closely with the Ministries of Social and Internal Affairs, as well as NGOs. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has launched prevention programs, providing information on living and work abroad and rendering consular assistance (consultation, repatriation) to victims of trafficking. The Government is funding services for trafficking victims through Social Insurance Board (Victim support unit). The Ministry of Social Affairs is funding special counselling services for people involved in prostitution.

Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings

79. Estonia continues international co-operation in the area of anti-trafficking, inter alia within the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings of the Council of the Baltic Sea States³, chaired by Estonia in 2014/15.

Amendments to the Penal Code regarding trafficking

80. Substantial amendments to the Penal Code on human trafficking entered into force on 28 April 2013. A separate provision on trafficking of human beings was added to the Penal Code, corresponding to the regulation of the Palermo protocol.

81. Human trafficking to take advantage of minors was criminalised. It means influencing a person of less than eighteen years of age to cause him or her to commence or continue the commission of a criminal offence, begging, engagement in prostitution or working under unusual conditions or to appear as a model or actor in the manufacture of a pornographic or erotic performance or work.

82. In cases of human trafficking and related cases, a court may apply extended confiscation of assets acquired through criminal offence. This should also serve the objectives of combating serious organised crime.

H. National minorities, integration, citizenship, refugees

Financial support to cultural activities of minorities

83. Estonia provides financial support to cultural associations of national minorities and Sunday schools as well as extra-curricular Estonian language teaching for young people with a language of instruction different from Estonian in Estonian families and camps.

Estonia also maintains media and co-operation activities as well as provides information in different languages.

84. In 2015 the Youth Agency of the Ministry of Education and Research led Archimedes Foundation launched a new project “Youth Meetings”⁴ to enhance communication and mutual understanding between young people of age 11–16 residing in Estonia. Its wider purpose is to grow cultural awareness, openness and tolerance of the participants and the society in general. The project activities are developed and led by the young people themselves on topics they consider interesting or important.

The Etnoweb project

85. In 2014, the project “Enriching Estonian collective multicultural culture-related information space in web portals culture.ee and EtnoWeb⁵” was carried out. The project broadened the collective communicative sphere of different nationalities residing in Estonia and raised their awareness of the cultural traditions and activities of different groups, thus encouraging coherence through practical contacts. The Etnoweb portal, created in 2010, gives the opportunity for the interested parties to read news from communities and government institutions in Estonian, Russian and English. Information about current competitions, calls for proposals, project partner(s) and contact information of consultants and officials can be found at the website.

Strategy of Integration

86. At the end of 2012, the Government approved drafting of the new Strategy of Integration for the new programming period (2014–2020). The Strategy takes into account changes in the society, evaluated and studied with the help of monitoring and surveys. During the first half of 2013, discussions of working groups were held in different regions of Estonia, involving 1,300 people. The working language was Estonian, Russian or English depending on the target group. Drafting of the Strategy was co-ordinated by the Ministry of Culture and managed by an inter-ministerial Steering Committee of the Strategy of Integration. The Steering Committee established an Expert Committee comprised of experts and researchers in the field of integration to help with the drafting, formed mainly of persons with immigrant background to engage different target groups and stakeholders. A special website in Estonian, Russian and English⁶, was created to cover the preparation of the Strategy and provide information to the public. The participants also created respective groups in Facebook. Summaries of the discussions are available online⁷.

87. The new Strategy of Integration and Social Cohesion “Lõimuv Eesti 2020” addresses integration as a multi-way process where preservation of the ethnic identity and culture of ethnic groups is supported and more equal opportunities for subsistence and participation in social life are created. The general objective of the Strategy of Integration is a socially cohesive Estonian society, in which individuals with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds actively participate in the society and share democratic values. The strategy supports three wider courses of action: 1) increasing the openness of the society and shaping pro-integration attitudes; 2) continued support to long-term residents of foreign origin who have made little progress in integrating; 3) contributing to new immigrants’ ability to adapt and integrate.

88. The sixth and so far the last Integration Monitoring survey was carried out in 2014–2015. The survey research sampled a total of 1,200 respondents; additionally, focus group interviews were conducted on multilingual schools, media consumption and employment opportunities for young people of different nationalities.

89. The most important conclusions of the survey were: Estonian language skill and its symbolic meaning is increasing among the residents of other nationalities; the trust towards

state institutions continues to be higher among Estonians than other nationalities; however, the trust of young people of other nationalities towards state institutions is similar to that of young Estonians i.e. higher than that of the elderly generation, including Russian-speakers.

Russian language media

90. In September 2014, a Commission of the Ministry of Culture suggested that Estonian Public Broadcasting pay more attention to Russian language broadcasting by expanding Russian language coverage in Radio4, its web portal and Russian language news. The Commission concluded that the Russian speaking audience needs institutional support and long term strategic vision by the Public Broadcasting.

91. On 28 September 2015 the Estonian Public Broadcasting (ERR) launched its first Russian language Public Broadcasting TV channel ETV+. The new TV channel is independent and directed mainly to the Russian speaking audience. The aim of the channel is to provide a balanced high quality programme reflecting everyday life and culture in Estonia for all society groups, thus helping to further integrate the Russian speaking population and ensure an adequate picture of the Estonian society.

Support for language learning

92. The Ministry of Education and Research systematically supports language learning activities that lead to more coherent integration of the society. The Language Education Policy Profile attempts to strengthen ongoing reforms in Estonia. There are constitutional guarantees of support for minority groups who wish to maintain their language and culture.

93. The punitive role of the Estonian Language Inspectorate has considerably decreased. 1 January 2015 an amendment of the Penal Code and related acts entered into force decriminalising the number of cases where the inspectors need to impose fines. Non-sufficient command of state language is no longer an administrative offence. Language inspectors shall provide adequate and realistic amount of time in the prescription for gaining the level of state language needed in a certain occupation. No punishments have been imposed in 2015. Thus, the supportive role of the Inspectorate has increased: since 1 July 2015 it supervises the applications of private companies who want to provide language courses. The right to high quality language studies is thereby better guaranteed for the employees.

94. In formal education, it is possible to learn only in Russian as a minority language. However, on request of at least 10 representatives of a certain native language in the school or local municipality, the municipality is obliged to provide lessons of that language. The state also finances approximately 20 Sunday schools where different languages and cultures are studied at weekends.

95. For all who successfully pass A2, B1, B2 or C1 level Estonian language exam, costs of the language studies are reimbursed. The state also enables free language courses for the employees in the public sector. Extending e-learning options for levels 0-A2 based on Russian or English are available free of charge (www.keeleklikk.ee).

The Unemployment Insurance Fund and minorities

96. The Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund offers 20 labour market services to support people entering the labour market. The Fund offers services, using an individual approach to each person regardless of their nationality or language skills, identifying the person's needs and prospects in entering the labour market. In offering labour market services, the individual's professional training, work experience, needs and opportunities are considered. Clients whose employment is hindered by lack of Estonian language skills are offered Estonian language training. Consultants of the Fund counsel Russian-speakers

in Russian, ensuring that people are informed about their possibilities and obligations. If needed, the Fund also offers counselling in English.

Other integration initiatives

97. The Youth Field Development Plan for 2014–2020 contributes to the increasing of the competitiveness of Estonian residents with a different linguistic and cultural background and to the inclusion and employment capacity of young people. The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2014-2020, the 2014-2020 Strategy of the Language Immersion Programme and the Development plan of the Estonian language 2011-2017, as well as labour market services based on individual needs contribute to the ensuring of the competitive knowledge and skills of students and adults with a different linguistic and cultural background.

The rights of persons with undetermined citizenship

98. For historical reasons, Estonia has a considerable number of persons with undetermined citizenship.⁸ A major state policy objective is to promote acquisition of Estonian citizenship through naturalisation, minimise the number of persons with undetermined citizenship and thus encourage long term residents to become Estonian citizens. The state has constantly taken steps to facilitate this process: for example the compensation of Estonian language training costs, the consolidation of exams, and the partial or complete exemption of persons with disabilities from exams.

99. Persons with undetermined citizenship who live in Estonia have long-term relations with Estonia and enjoy social, economic and cultural rights equally with citizens of Estonia. Permanent residents are also guaranteed several political rights, thus they can vote in local elections, but not run for and elect the Parliament as that requires Estonian citizenship. There are no other restrictions to the right to participate in public affairs, including the right to form non-profit associations. Permanent residents with undetermined citizenship have rights as third country nationals with long-term residence in the EU, which guarantees them extensive rights of movement and access to employment throughout the EU. In addition, they have a right for visa-free entry to the Russian Federation.

100. As a result of the constant Government policy of integration, the number of persons with undetermined citizenship has decreased from 9% in 2007 to 6.3% in 2015. The Government continues efforts to increase the motivation among potential citizenship applicants by offering free language courses, organising information work and continuing the individual approach to citizenship applicants. For example, since February 2008, the parents of a child with undetermined citizenship are informed personally by the Police and Border Guard Board of the possibility to apply for Estonian citizenship for the child.

Children and elderly persons with undetermined citizenship

101. Amendments to the Citizenship Act that entered into force on 13 February 2015 released applicants older than 65 years of age, applying for Estonian citizenship from the obligation to take the written part of the Estonian language exam.

102. An amendment to the Citizenship Act that will enter into force on 1 January 2016 will guarantee the right to acquire Estonian citizenship by naturalisation from the day of birth to all children born in Estonia to parents with undetermined citizenship, if the parents have legally resided in Estonia for at least 5 years at the time of the child's birth, and therefore serves to halt the perpetuation of statelessness. The parents of the child have the right to refuse this opportunity within 1 year.

103. Minors under 15 years of age, born in Estonia before 1 January 2016 acquire Estonian citizenship by naturalisation starting from 1 January 2016 if their parents or a

single parent have been residing in Estonia for at least five years by the time of birth of the child and if they are not considered citizens by any other State on the basis of any legal act in force. The parents of the child have also the right to refuse this opportunity within 1 year.

The Roma

104. The Estonian Ministry of Culture has compiled a National strategy for Roma integration.⁹ The document is an integrated set of policy measures within Estonia's social inclusion policies. The objective is to mainstream Roma inclusion into all public policies aimed at the gradual elimination of poverty and social exclusion among marginalised Roma communities, in particular in the areas of education, employment, health and housing.

Third country nationals and asylum seekers

105. Estonia has taken steps to improve the situation of asylum seekers. Until 2014, the Accommodation Centre for Asylum Seekers was located in Illuka Parish in Ida-Viru County. In 2013, the Ministry of Social Affairs subscribed a private company, Hoolekandeteenus AS to provide accommodation services for asylum seekers. Since 2014, the accommodation centre is situated in Vao Village in Lääne-Viru County. Access to public services, including education, labour market and health care services in the new location is better than in the previous location. Asylum seekers living in the accommodation centre are granted access to health care without charge and provided with medication prescribed by a health care professional.

106. Estonia complies with the European Union (EU) legislation on the standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, on a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and on the content of the protection granted. Amendments to the Act on Granting International Protection to Aliens and other related legal acts have been prepared to transpose further EU legislation relating to the granting and withdrawing of international protection and to the standards of reception. The EU legislation upholds the standards of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees as supplemented by the 1967 Protocol as well as other related international conventions.

I. Persons with disabilities and elderly persons

Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol

107. Estonia ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol in 2012. Preparations to nominate the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner as the independent monitoring mechanism started in 2015, including amendments in legislation and allocating the necessary resources.

108. After the ratification, the Ministry of Social Affairs became the focal point of the Convention. Every ministry is responsible for the implementation of the Convention in the scope of its responsibilities to mainstream disability issues and foster the Convention's implementation.

Special Care Development Plan

109. The Special Care Development Plan 2014-2020 (adopted in 2014) aims to provide equal opportunities for self-realisation of people with special mental needs, develop high quality special care, and continue the reorganisation of special care homes according to deinstitutionalisation principles.

Co-operation Agreement for Ensuring Social Protection for Persons with Disabilities or Health Damage

110. On 18 November 2014, twelve organisations signed a Co-operation Agreement for Ensuring Social Protection for Persons with Disabilities or Health Damage, open for all organisations. The Agreement describes principles and measures to develop preventive actions, increase employment among persons with reduced work capacity, develop and increase the availability and accessibility of supportive labour market and welfare services, promote and increase the accessibility of education and increase public awareness.

Rights of persons with disabilities

111. Pursuant to the Constitution, everyone is equal before the law and people with disabilities have the same human rights and fundamental freedoms as everybody else in Estonia, including the right to vote and the right to be elected.

112. The possibility to exercise one's right to vote is guaranteed by numerous alternatives of voting. If a person not staying at his or her place of residence is unable to vote in his or her voting district due to the state of health or for another reason, he or she may submit a written application during the early voting period to vote in advance at his or her actual location (e.g. in hospital, nursing home, a residency not registered as place of residence of the person). To vote at one's location in advance, one must submit a written application to the local responsible office on the last day of advance voting at the latest.

113. If a person is unable to vote at his or her polling station on the election day due to the state of health or another valid reason, he or she may apply for voting at home, submitting an application either in writing or by phone. An application by phone to the local election committee in charge may be submitted on the election day. Every voter also has the opportunity to vote electronically online at municipal and parliamentary elections and elections to the European Parliament. Using an ID-card or mobile-ID, the voter may cast the vote from home. Voting options are described on the voter card, sent to every voter. Contacts of the local voting committee can be found on the voter's card or at the website of the National Election Committee¹⁰.

114. The Constitution guarantees everyone's right to recourse to the courts. Persons with disabilities have full procedural legal capacity, they can exercise all procedural rights and obligations independently, unless this right has been explicitly restricted by a court. Estonian procedural law provides that if a participant in a proceeding is deaf, mute or deaf-mute, the course of the proceeding must be communicated to him or her in writing or through an interpreter or translator during the proceedings. The Code of Criminal Procedure further provides that investigative authorities, prosecutors and courts are obliged to ensure effective communication with persons with disabilities. The Code stipulates that the criminal defence counsel's participation in the entire criminal proceedings is mandatory if the person's mental or physical disability renders him or her unable to defend himself or herself or if the defence is made difficult by it.

115. Whereas judicial proceedings are public as a rule, a court may declare a proceeding or session to be closed, *inter alia* in the interests of a minor or a person with a mental or intellectual disability, and in particular in order to hear the statements or testimony of such person.

Elderly persons

116. Active Ageing Development Plan 2013-2020 (adopted in 2013) aims to promote an ageing friendly society and ensure the quality of life and equal opportunities for elderly persons. Measures and activities are planned to increase elderly people's participation in society, participation in the labour market and lifelong learning, increase satisfaction with

working life and promote their health and everyday coping. The aims in four policy areas are supported by overarching principles on creating age-friendly life environment and attitudes, values and practices supporting active ageing; increasing people's awareness and knowledge of the matters related to active ageing (including the needs, resources and opportunities of elderly persons); and supporting cooperation and coordinated activity for the provision of innovative and successful solutions and for the achievement of established goals. The plan also serves as a basis for drawing up the Welfare Development Plan 2016-2023, and in the framework of the latter, a detailed action plan for the policy on the elderly will be elaborated.

J. The pension system, family allowances and labour market measures

Helping incapacitated persons back to work

117. In 2012, Estonia launched a reform of the incapacity for work scheme to increase the supply of workforce, reduce the health risks faced by employees, preserve the working ability and prevent the unemployment as well as raise the competitiveness of risk groups in labour markets.

118. Under this reform, the assessment of work ability, the payment of benefits and the provision of services are directed towards helping persons with disabilities or health damage return to the labour market. The assessment of work ability will replace the assessment of incapacity for work. The individual will gain access to rehabilitation possibilities at the earliest stages of incapacity for work, to avoid long term health damage. In other cases, requalification/training together with activation measures will be provided.

119. The cornerstone of the reform is active labour market services to help people with reduced working ability return to the labour market. New measures are designed to respond to the needs of people with reduced ability to work: temporary sheltered employment, transportation support, work-related rehabilitation, mobile counselling, and experience based counselling.

Improvement of social welfare services

120. To guarantee the quality of the rehabilitation service, it will be divided into two parts: vocational rehabilitation and social rehabilitation. Such division enables to offer better-targeted services that result in higher effectiveness. Persons with partial capability of work will receive rehabilitation services, linked with their (possible) employment. The maximum amount of their services will increase compared to the current budget that enables clients to receive services with shorter waiting time and in greater amount. Children, elderly people and people incapable to work will receive services that increase their social coping.

121. In 2012, the guidelines for voluntary social welfare services were elaborated to improve the delivery of services and the provision of information to both service providers and the people in need of these services and their family members. The New Social Welfare Act that sets minimum requirements for the local government welfare services and thus improves their quality was adopted in December 2015 and will enter into force in 2016.

Unemployed persons

122. Estonia continues to provide labour market measures to unemployed people to help them return to the labour market. People can benefit from different counselling services (career guidance, job search workshops, psychological counselling), measures to help gain skills (work practice, training) or help in business start-up (start-up subsidy and mentoring). To help people with partial work ability, there is support for the adaptation of workplace or

covering the costs of special equipment and services, which helps cover the costs of working with a support person.

Vulnerable persons

123. Resources are allocated to help young people and long-term unemployed enter and return to the labour market. There are measures, supporting old-age pensioners; for example since the beginning of 2015, old-age pensioners who are looking for work can benefit from labour market services and career guidance is provided to people who are not working or not active in the labour market, to facilitate smoother transitions into the labour market. Since 2015, EU Funds are used to provide additional food support for the most deprived people.

K. Education

Inclusive education

124. The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy for 2014–2020¹¹ sets policy targets for inclusive education, whereas the development of inclusive competence-based national curriculum, the inclusion of national minorities, teacher education, and educational counselling are set as sub-goals.

125. In autumn 2014, a regional educational and career counselling network of so-called Pathfinders was initiated. This brings a high level professional counselling service close to home for every student in Estonia and pays special attention to pupils with special educational needs.

126. According to Estonian Integration Monitoring 2011, the proficiency of non-Estonian speaking residents in the national language is improving. The transition to Estonian language in gymnasiums ended in 2014. Since 2014/2015 at least 60% of compulsory subjects in schools with the Russian language of instruction are taught in Estonian. The results of state exams and self-assessment of schools show that the level of academic knowledge has not decreased and the command of Estonian improves year by year.

127. The transition to Estonian language of instruction is not compulsory in basic schools but teaching and learning of Estonian is supported by several state level measures such as financial support for schools, teacher trainings and curriculum development. The Ministry of Education and Research is currently organising a state-wide competition of ideas to develop a digital study material supporting the learning of Estonian in Russian language schools, combined learning of subject and language and for using in schools with Estonian language of instruction to support students with a different native language than Estonian. In 2015/2016 there are 81 basic schools with the Russian or mixed Estonian and Russian language of instruction in Estonia, there are only nine schools where no subject besides Estonian as a state language is taught in Estonian.

128. Estonian language immersion programme is growing extensively popular – approximately 50% of Russian language schools have joined the programme. Different studies indicate that students who have passed the language immersion programme will reach command in three languages – Estonian, Russian and English – and succeed in other subjects as well.

129. The Universities Act stipulates that the standard period of study is extended by up to one academic year for a student who is not proficient in Estonian, if (s)he studies Estonian in depth under the conditions, established by the minister responsible for the area.

Human rights education

130. Pursuant to the Estonian Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act, human rights are core values of general education. Schools shall build up a school culture respecting democratic and human right values. Within the learning process, human rights are connected with the core competences (e.g. value and cultural; social and civic; self-awareness; communication competence) described in the general part of the national curriculum.

131. Human rights education in connection with value education, media literacy and critical thinking is a target for the General Education Programme 2016-2019 (part of the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020). According to the Programme, a concept of human rights education as a cross-curricular topic in Estonian education system will be developed by 2017.

132. The Ministry of Education and Research consistently co-operates with human rights NGOs. In co-operation with the Human Rights Institute, the Council of Europe manual on Human Rights Education with young people COMPASS was published in Estonian in 2014. Also, training for trainers in the field of human rights education was organised.

133. Human rights are also considered in the curriculum of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences (EASS). EASS provides internal security education at three levels (vocational, applied higher and masters education) for police, prison, rescue, taxation and customs services. Lifelong learning services are provided for all target-groups. Human rights have a special attention in police and corrections (prison service) curricula.

134. In August 2015 Regional Summer Academy for the Baltics organised in co-operation with the Council of Europe, the European Wergeland Centre, the Estonian Ministry of Education and the Estonian Institute for Human Rights took place in Tallinn. Adapted to national and regional priorities, the Academy combines a school-wide approach to human rights, democratic citizenship and history education. Sharing a common past, the three countries will benefit from a programme that helps their multicultural societies create spaces for dialogue and reinforce a culture of co-operation.

IV. Achievements and shortcomings

135. Since the first UPR cycle in 2011, among many developments, Estonia has substantially reformed its Penal Code and taken decisive steps to combat violence, including domestic violence. Despite the times of economic hardship, crime is in decline and the number of prisoners is steadily decreasing. In 2016 The Government will consider amendments to Penal Code involving FGM, stalking, forced marriages and prohibition of buying sexual services from trafficking victims.

136. The institution of the Ombudsman for Children was established; its duties are fulfilled by the Chancellor of Justice.

137. The amendment to the Citizenship Act will guarantee a right to acquire Estonian citizenship by naturalisation to children born in Estonia to parents with undetermined citizenship and therefore serves to halt the perpetuation of statelessness.

138. Estonia has become a party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and is setting up an independent monitoring mechanism of the implementation of the Convention. Also, decisive steps to reform the social welfare framework for the disabled and other challenged social groups have been taken. The important issue of taking proper care of the disabled, the elderly and children has reached the centre of attention of

the society and will stay in focus. The work ability reform focuses on employment and ability to cope.

139. Estonia has taken steps to promote tolerance, cultural diversity and integration. The Registered Partnership Act is a milestone in this regard. Yet there is more to be done to achieve even more tolerant attitude among the population. Discussion and inclusion are important tools on this path.

V. Commitments

140. Estonia will continue its efforts to become party to the Convention on Enforced Disappearances.

141. Estonia will take steps to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention).

142. Estonia will take steps to accede to the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.

143. Estonia will adopt and implement a development and action plan in the areas of employment, social protection, inclusion, gender equality and equal opportunities for the years 2016–2023.

Notes

¹ See at <http://oiguskantsler.ee/en/annual-report-ill-treatment>.

² See the websites at <http://www.kriminaalpoliitika.ee/et/teemalehed/inimkaubandus> and (<http://www.sm.ee/et/inimkaubandus-ja-prostitutsioon>), respectively.

³ <http://www.cbss.org/safe-secure-region/tfthb/>

⁴ <http://euroopa.noored.ee/rahastus/noortekohtumised>

⁵ <http://www.etnoweb.ee/>

⁶ www.integratsioon.ee

⁷ www.etnoweb.ee/arutelud and www.integratsioon.ee

⁸ On citizenship issues, see: <http://estonia.eu/about-estonia/society/citizenship.html>.

⁹ The set of policy measures for Roma integration in Estonia, available online: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_estonia_strategy_en.pdf.

¹⁰ www.vvk.ee

¹¹ See: https://hm.ee/sites/default/files/estonian_lifelong_strategy.pdf