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**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE
FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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Fifth Report submitted by Estonia

**Pursuant to Article 25, paragraph 2 of the Framework
Convention for the Protection of National Minorities –
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**ESTONIA'S FIFTH REPORT
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
COUNCIL OF EUROPE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION
FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES 2019**

1 November 2019

Introduction

1. The Republic of Estonia signed the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter the *Framework Convention or Convention*) on 2 February 1995 and it entered into force in respect of Estonia on 1 February 1998. The Framework Convention is available in Estonian in Riigi Teataja and on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2. Estonia's fourth report was submitted on 2 May 2014. The Council of Europe Advisory Committee (hereinafter the *Advisory Committee*) delegation visited Estonia from 17 to 21 November 2014. The Committee met with the representatives of different government agencies and NGOs with the aim to obtain information about the implementation of the requirements of the Convention in Estonia. The Advisory Committee's opinion on Estonia was adopted on 19 March 2015 and published on 21 October 2015. The Estonian Government submitted its comments on 28 September 2015. The Council of Europe Committee of Ministers (hereinafter the *Committee of Ministers*) passed the resolution on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in Estonia on 26 October 2016.

3. Estonia's fifth report mainly covers the period from 2014 to 2018 but also certain developments in the first half of 2019. Statistics are presented as at 2017, 2018 or the first half of 2019, depending on availability. The report covers legislative, administrative and other measures taken to implement the rights established under the Convention and it takes into account the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee while considering Estonia's fourth report.

4. The issues covered by the Convention are within the competence of several Ministries. The report was prepared in cooperation of the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It also includes information provided by the Chancellor of Justice and the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner.

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

5. The Estonian authorities highly appreciate the ongoing dialogue with the Advisory Committee and continues to make efforts to promote increasingly wider implementation of rights enshrined in the Framework Convention on different levels of legislation and practice.

6. Estonia considers it important to inform the inhabitants and stakeholders of the rights and obligations arising from the Convention and to involve civil society in shaping the activities which affect them. The Government believes that this can best be provided through specific activities. The state integration policy is enshrined in the Estonian Integration Plan for 2014–2020. This Plan is very important for guaranteeing the rights under the Framework Convention through promoting common understanding and multiculturalism. Integration Plans have been prepared with the participation of and contribution by various stakeholders, above all representatives of national minorities, who are a significant target group of the implementation of Integration Plans and who have also been involved in the exercise of supervision over the implementation of Integration Plans.

7. Reports submitted for implementing the Framework Convention along with the opinions of the Advisory Committee and resolutions of the Committee of Ministers are published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The same practice applies to the fifth reporting cycle. After the submission of the fifth report to the Council of Europe it will be published in Estonian and English on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, likewise subsequent relevant documents, such as the opinion of the Advisory Committee, the Government's comments and the resolution of the Committee of Ministers.

II. Developments at the national level after the fourth monitoring cycle

8. One of the most important recent developments was the creation of the position of Minister of Population in 2019 within the Ministry of the Interior. The area of responsibility of the Minister of Population consists of planning and coordination of the population and family policy and new immigrants' adaptation policy, involvement of Estonian communities abroad, planning and coordination of the development of civil society, and issues related to population procedures and religious associations. Integration policy related tasks, including creating conditions for the development of cultural life of national minorities and their integration into Estonian society, lie within the competence of the Ministry of Culture.

9. Another important development compared to the previous reporting period is that based on the Paris Principles adopted by UN General Assembly resolution of 20 December 1993, which impose on Member States an obligation to establish an independent national human rights institution, the Chancellor of Justice started performing the functions of Estonian national institution for the protection and promotion of human rights (NHRI) as of 1 January 2019. Relevant Act Amending the Chancellor of Justice Act was passed by Riigikogu on 13 June 2018.

10. Other important developments in legislation and practice are reviewed under relevant Articles.

III Implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee of Ministers in its resolution: Implementation of the provisions of the Convention Article by Article

Article 3

1. Every person belonging to a national minority shall have the right freely to choose to be treated or not to be treated as such and no disadvantage shall result from this choice or from the exercise of the rights which are connected to that choice.
2. Persons belonging to national minorities may exercise the rights and enjoy the freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention individually as well as in community with others.

Scope of application of the Framework Convention

In its recommendations the Advisory Committee suggested pursuing an open and inclusive approach to the Framework Convention's personal scope of application.

11. According to the declaration made at the time of ratifying the Framework Convention, Estonia only considers ethnic groups whose members are Estonian citizens to be national minorities within the meaning of the Convention. The declaration has been reflected in detail in Estonia's second report and no changes have occurred. The Government reiterates that, in

practice, an extensive and open approach to the application of the Framework Convention is applied and the rights enshrined therein are accessible to all members of national minorities living in Estonia.

12. Therefore, the Advisory Committee's recommendation concerning the application of the Framework Convention is complied with in practice; the Government finds it important, above all, to ensure that persons belonging to national minorities have a feasible opportunity to comprehensively exercise the rights provided by the Framework Convention, rather than to amend the declaration made in ratifying the Convention.

Citizenship

The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities continue their efforts to reduce the number of stateless persons and simplify the acquisition of citizenship.

13. The Advisory Committee's recommendations have received a lot of attention and compliance. The reduction of the number of persons with undetermined citizenship among the population and the enhanced integration of all residents of Estonia in society has been a priority for the Government through the years. Estonia has consistently taken various legal and wider integration policy steps to reduce the number of persons with undetermined citizenship and promote their application for Estonian citizenship.

14. In recent years the Estonian Government has taken several measures to raise people's interest in applying for citizenship. This aim has been greatly contributed to by amendments to the Citizenship Act and various awareness-raising activities. The procedure for applying for citizenship has been simplified on a number of occasions considering, above all, the interests of the most vulnerable groups such as minors, the elderly and disabled people. The issues of citizenship and groups concerned have also been a major point of focus in national integration plans through the years.

15. Estonia has gone through an important development, having reduced the number of persons with undetermined citizenship from 32% in 1992 to 5% in 2018. Since Estonia regained its independence more than 160,000 people have been given Estonian citizenship or it has been restored. The number of persons with undetermined citizenship has decreased, above all, in connection with the acquisition of the citizenship of the Republic of Estonia but there are also other reasons, for example citizenship of another country has been acquired or persons have deceased.

16. Compared to the previous reporting cycle, i.e. from the beginning of 2014 to the present day, the number of persons with undetermined citizenship is significantly lower and in constant decline. According to the Police and Border Guard Board, on 01.01.2014 there were 91,288 persons with undetermined citizenship living in Estonia under a valid residence permit, 1086 of whom were children under 15 years of age, but on 01.01.2019 the number of persons with undetermined citizenship was lower by 13,410 persons and there were 77,878 persons with undetermined citizenship living in Estonia, 136 of whom were children under 15 years of age. Consequently, persons with undetermined citizenship form 5.5% of the number of Estonian residents. According to the Population Register, on 01.05.2018 there were 76,566 people with undetermined citizenship and a valid residence permit and persons with a valid right of residence or residence permit whose registered place of residence was in Estonia.

17. On 01.01.2016 the Citizenship Act was amended, resulting in simpler and more flexible citizenship proceedings and in children of parents with undetermined citizenship automatically acquiring Estonian citizenship without applying for it. It is important to stress that the increase of children with undetermined citizenship is impossible because all children born in Estonia and children who move to Estonia with their parents right after birth and who would have undetermined citizenship based on their parents automatically become citizens of Estonia by naturalisation as of the moment of birth. There is one condition though – the child's parents or single parent cannot be a citizen of any state and by the moment of the child's birth they must have legally resided in Estonia for at least five years.

18. According to the above amendment to the Citizenship Act, as of 01.01.2016 Estonian citizenship is also automatically given to children born in Estonia before 01.01.2016 whose both parents had undetermined citizenship and had legally resided in Estonia for at least five years. This amendment has led to 1301 children being automatically given Estonian citizenship between 01.01.2016 and 01.01.2019.

19. On 13.02.2015 the conditions for naturalisation were simplified for people over 65 years of age. When applying for citizenship they need not take the full Estonian language test, but only the oral test.

20. In addition to said amendments, another two important changes simplifying the naturalisation process took effect on 01.01.2016. Earlier a person applying for naturalisation was subject to a 6-month waiting period and thereafter the applicant had to confirm their continued desire, but the waiting period and confirmation requirements have now been abandoned. It is also important that the requirement of having resided in Estonia for eight years, the past five of which consecutively, has been replaced by a requirement of simply having resided in Estonia for eight years.

21. In addition to the above measures, the prefectures of the Police and Border Guard Board continue with steady awareness raising which means that officials explain to persons with undetermined citizenship, regardless of why they have contacted the officials, that they can apply for Estonian citizenship for themselves and their children and point out the benefits of Estonian citizenship compared to no citizenship.

22. Based on the amendments to the Citizenship Act the Ministry of Culture organised relevant meetings and roundtables in September and October 2015, focusing on the issues of reducing the number of persons with undetermined citizenship and valuing Estonian citizenship. As a result, the Integration Foundation drew up a 2016 action plan for additionally introducing options for applying for citizenship. The action plan was carried out in tight cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and Research, Foundation Innove and the civic associations and local governments of Harju County and Ida-Viru County.

23. According to the 2017 Estonian Integration Monitoring, the number of persons with undetermined citizenship and with Russian citizenship who found the citizenship examination to be too complicated had decreased compared to 2015 (57% in 2015 and 46% in 2017). The number of people unable to learn Estonian had also decreased (51% in 2015 and 39% in 2017). One of the reasons most often given was that lack of Estonian citizenship did not prevent living in Estonia (34% in 2015 and 41% in 2017).

24. Since a prerequisite for the acquisition of Estonian citizenship is proficiency in the official language, Estonia has consistently taken steps for promoting learning Estonian, paying special attention to regions inhabited by people who have another native language. The integration programme offered training to prepare for naturalisation, but it also offered Estonian language and culture immersion. In addition to studies in a classroom, the Integration Foundation also offers possibilities for practising it in Estonian language and culture clubs and language cafés in different regions of the country. Language studies are offered, above all, to people who have enrolled in classes through the Integration Foundation's website, who take preparation courses for the examination on the knowledge of the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia and the Citizenship Act and who are applying for citizenship.

25. There are more and more options for learning Estonian for free. The Integration Foundation continues personal counselling of persons with undetermined citizenship concerning employment, education, social services, legal aid, social welfare, health care, state benefits, language studies, adjustment courses and possibilities for applying for citizenship. There is also a free helpline 800 9999.

26. In 2018 new provisions were added to the Citizenship Act that support the achievement of the Estonian language level necessary for applying for Estonian citizenship. As of 2019 applicants for Estonian citizenship can learn Estonian free of charge and the state also pays them compensation for unpaid study leave (so-called citizen agreements). Such an agreement is available to persons who have resided in Estonia on a legal basis for at least five years, who meet the requirements for applying for citizenship and who want to apply for Estonian citizenship. The agreement enables single free-of-charge Estonian language study from level zero to level B1 of independent language use. Compensation for language study is paid on the basis of average wages for 20 calendar days. Language studies are arranged by the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences.

27. The tradition of festive ceremonies for presenting citizenship certificates is continued with the aim of showing appreciation to the new citizens of the Republic of Estonia that have passed the naturalisation process. The citizenship ceremonies are carried out by the Ministry of the Interior and the Police and Border Guard Board. For the purpose of increasing legal awareness the Ministry of Justice has expanded the range of users of the website www.juristaitab.ee among the Russian speaking population. Free legal aid is provided in Russian.

28. 26 November is the day for celebrating Citizen's Day with various events all over Estonia to value being a citizen and raise awareness of the status of citizens. The Integration Foundation organises an essay writing competition for young people of different nationalities and everyone can take a quiz on the Foundation's website, the winners of which are announced on Citizen's Day. Citizen's Day is aimed at all citizens of Estonia and applicants for citizenship regardless of their nationality.

Collection of data

The Advisory Committee recommended gathering population statistics regularly and engaging with minority representatives in analysing the results, particularly where they are used for the application of minority rights.

29. Gathering of statistical data is the responsibility of Statistics Estonia. According to Statistics Estonia (01.01.2016), foreign population forms 27.3% of the Estonian population.

People of more than 190 different nationalities live in Estonia, 68.7% of whom are Estonians and 31.3% are of other nationalities: 24.8% are Russians (321,198) and 1.7% are Ukrainians (22,302). Belarusians (12,419) and Finns (7,423) account for less than 1%.

30. A question about ethnic origin was included in the questionnaire of the 2011 census. The questionnaire together with explanations (also an electronic version was available) was in Estonian, English and Russian. Estonia respects the right of national minorities to self-determination. The question about ethnic origin is voluntary. If basic information includes only one or two representatives of certain ethnic origin, Statistics Estonia publishes this information under “other national origin” to avoid the possible identification of the persons.

31. Principles and requirements ensuing from Regulation 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council extend to information concerning nationality. Although according to the Regulation data revealing ethnic or racial origin are deemed sensitive personal data, legal instruments do not preclude the gathering of such data in general. All surveys proceed from the requirement that personal data may only be processed in the course of the performance of public duties in order to perform obligations prescribed by law, an international agreement or directly applicable legislation of the Council of the European Union or the European Commission, and processing thereof for other purposes is permitted only with the consent of the data subject.

32. Statistics Estonia and the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund gather statistical data which allow making more efficacious political decisions about measures intended for a specific target group. Moreover, governmental authorities have commissioned specific surveys with the aim of having a constant adequate overview of their needs and expectations. For instance, integration indicator databases compiled by Statistics Estonia on the commission of the Ministry of Culture in 2015 reflect the acquisition of an education by groups of people with different home language, citizenship and origin, their participation in employment, their socio-economic coping and living conditions.

33. The 2020 Population and Housing Census is planned to be conducted mainly based on registers (codename REGREL – Register-based Population and Housing Census). The census programme includes all 38 features of population and housing censuses referred to in Regulation No. 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

34. A package of legal and organisational measures for ensuring Ministries the quality, up-to-date nature and cover of the data necessary for REGREL has been devised. An essential feature is the obligation of people to check on a regular basis and specify their essential personal data (nationality, place of residence, etc.) in the Population Register when their identity documents issued for at least five years expire and need to be replaced.

Article 4

1. The Parties undertake to guarantee to persons belonging to national minorities the right of equality before the law and of equal protection of the law. In this respect, any discrimination based on belonging to a national minority shall be prohibited.
2. The Parties undertake to adopt, where necessary, adequate measures in order to promote, in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, full and effective equality between persons belonging to a national minority and those belonging to the majority. In this respect, they shall take due account of the specific conditions of the persons belonging to national minorities.

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

Anti-discrimination legislation and its implementation

The Advisory Committee recommended to provide adequate resources to the Office of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner and to enhance the awareness of the Chancellor of Justice and his mandate within the broader population.

35. The general principles of prohibition of discrimination are provided for in the Constitution and efforts continue to eliminate the occurrences of discrimination in legislation and practice. According to § 12 of the Constitution. No one may be discriminated against on the basis of nationality, race, colour, sex, language, origin, religion, political or other views, property or social status, or on other grounds. The rights of persons belonging to minorities are ensured by applicable legislation and no significant amendments have occurred during the reporting period.

36. Prejudices, stereotypes and rather low awareness of the principle of equal treatment in the society may still be the cause of discrimination incidents. Raising the awareness of legal specialists of the Equal Treatment Act and its interpretation possibilities help to improve the quality of relevant legal assistance and decision making.

37. These problems are addressed in the “**Welfare Development Plan 2016–2023**” approved by the Government of the Republic in 2016. To minimise negative attitudes, increase tolerance and improve the protection of rights, the development plan intends to help the public and specific target groups and stakeholders (including employers and employees), through awareness raising, to notice and become aware of the different situations and needs of different groups of the population and to guide them toward considering such differences.

38. Another aim is to raise people’s readiness to avail themselves of possibilities offered for the protection of their rights. The quality of legal aid is sought to be improved through training aimed, above all, at lawyers and other legal specialists. Legal protection is also improved by amending relevant laws.

39. In 2016, Act on Amendment of the State Legal Aid Act was adopted and it provided that an application for state legal aid may be filed in Estonian and in another language widely used in Estonia and in English by persons who are domiciled in another Member State of the European Union or are a citizen of another Member State of the European Union.

40. If someone alleges discrimination they can contact the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner for assistance and counselling. Discrimination disputes are resolved by a court or a labour dispute committee. Discrimination disputes are resolved by the Chancellor of Justice by way of conciliation procedures.

41. With the Equal Treatment Act (2008) Estonia has transposed into national law EU Directives 2000/78/EC and 2000/43/EC establishing a general framework of equal treatment. The objective of the Act is to ensure the protection of persons against discrimination on grounds of nationality (ethnic origin), race, colour, religion or other beliefs, age, disability or sexual orientation. Prohibition on discrimination and duty to promote equal treatment are included in the Employment Contracts Act (§ 3) and in the Civil Service Act (§ 13). Also the Penal Code enshrines provisions related to discrimination, setting out criminal liability for certain violations. The most important relevant provisions of the Code deal with the prohibition on incitement of hatred and on violation of equality.

42. For the purpose of improving the protection of equality rights, the Ministry of Social Affairs has prepared **amendments to the Equal Treatment Act**. The amendments seek to extend the protection provided by law against discrimination on the grounds of disability, age, religion, views and sexual orientation to outside of work. The objective of the amendments is to harmonise the scope of application of the Equal Treatment Act with the protection provided by applicable law against discrimination on the grounds of nationality (ethnic origin), race or colour so that in addition to one's work life the prohibition on discrimination would also include social protection (including social security and healthcare) and social benefits, acquisition of an education and access to goods and services offered to the public (including housing). The amendments would also extend the competence of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner.

43. There have been significant developments in financing the Office of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner. The Office of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner is financed from the state budget and additionally from external funds within relevant projects. The state budget funds have significantly increased as of the creation of the position in 2005. In 2015 the state budget funds were EUR 167,116 and in 2018 EUR 218,394, but in 2019 the permanent state budget funds allocated to the Office of the Commissioner are 45% higher than in 2018, amounting to EUR 460,000. The volume of various external funds depends on the scope of on-going projects and the relevant stage of a project, which does not affect the permanent state budget funding for the performance of the duties imposed on the Commissioner by law.

44. From 2014 to 2018 the Commissioner received a total of 85 inquiries under the grounds of race, nationality or ethnic origin. In 2014 there were a total of eight inquiries under the grounds of race, nationality or ethnic origin, three of which on the grounds of race and skin colour, three on the grounds of nationality and two concerning a suspicion of several grounds of discrimination related to all of the above grounds. No discrimination was identified for any of said inquiries under the circumstances stated.

45. In 2015 there were a total of 13 inquiries under the grounds of race, nationality or ethnic origin. Two of such inquiries were outside the competence of the Commissioner, on 10 occasions no discrimination was identified under the circumstances stated and on one occasion the possibility of indirect discrimination under the grounds of nationality was identified (it concerned language requirements).

46. In 2016 there were a total of 22 inquiries under the grounds of race, nationality or ethnic origin. 18 concerned nationality and four had to do with race. No discrimination was identified for any of said inquiries under the circumstances stated.

47. In 2017 there were a total of 20 inquiries under the grounds of race, nationality or ethnic origin. 14 of them concerned nationality, three race and three ethnic origin. Three of such inquiries were outside the competence of the Commissioner, on 16 occasions no discrimination was identified under the circumstances stated and on one occasion the possibility of indirect discrimination under the grounds of nationality was identified (a discriminating job advertisement).

48. In 2018 there were a total of 22 corresponding inquiries. 20 inquiries concerned the grounds of nationality and two race, no inquiries concerning the grounds of ethnic origin were

submitted. Three of such inquiries were outside the competence of the Commissioner, on 17 occasions no discrimination was identified under the circumstances stated and on two occasions the possibility of indirect discrimination under the grounds of nationality was identified (both concerned the criterion of nationality in a job advertisement – language proficiency requirement on the level of native speaker is considered discriminating).

49. People are becoming better aware of the activities of the Chancellor of Justice who has more and more actively participated in public discussions on the subject of human rights protection, people turn to the Chancellor of Justice for dealing with their various concerns and the number of individual complaints submitted is on the rise. Below is a summary of complaints concerning discrimination.

50. Summary of complaints to the Chancellor of Justice due to discrimination from 2014 to 2018

Discrimination grounds	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018
Nationality and ethnicity	2	1	3
Race	1	1	0
Language	4	1	2
Religion or religious views	2	4	2
Sexual orientation	3	2	3
Age	3	2	6
Gender	2	2	3
Disability	1	1	1

Article 5

1. The Parties undertake to promote the conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their culture, and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage.
2. Without prejudice to measures taken in pursuance of their general integration policy, the Parties shall refrain from policies or practices aimed at assimilation of persons belonging to national minorities against their will and shall protect these persons from any action aimed at such assimilation.

Support for national minority cultures

The Advisory Committee recommended to facilitate the process of the establishment of Cultural Councils by all the relevant minority groups, and to proceed with the review of the existing legislation. It was recommended to ensure the involvement of minority representatives in the decision-making processes on the allocation of funds to cultural projects.

51. The State supports cultural societies of national minorities in preserving, advancing and introducing their ethnic culture. Associations and collective bodies of national minorities may apply for subsidies on grounds equal to those of Estonian cultural associations. And there are special programmes for associations of national minorities. Nearly 300 cultural societies and associations of national minorities are registered in Estonia, whose operating expenses are partly covered by state budget funds as of the restoration of Estonia's independence in 1991. Besides the preservation and advancement of the culture of origin, priority is given to

tightening contacts between Estonians and other nationalities. The activities of societies is aimed at all people living in Estonia despite their citizenship or ethnic and cultural background.

52. Cultural societies have 18 umbrella organisations which get an activity support from the state budget. As of 2015 the Integration Foundation supports the umbrella organisations of national minorities through three-year framework agreements instead of former one-year agreements, thereby significantly reducing the administrative load of the organisations and facilitating the planning of activities. The volume of the state budget support measure has steadily grown; it was EUR 320,000 in 2014 and EUR 452,000 in 2018.

53. The cultural activities of national minorities are also supported, by way of project support from state budget funds, by the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and Research, the Cultural Endowment of Estonia, the Council of Gambling Tax (the Folk Culture Centre as of 2019) and the National Foundation of Civil Society. The preservation and advancement of the language and culture of national minorities are also supported by local governments through regular application rounds. Private funds and embassies also support the cultural activities of national minorities.

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

55. A Cultural Council for National Minorities has been operating as an advisory committee at the Ministry of Culture since 2008. The Council is competent to express opinions in issues of enhancing the cultural life and activities of national minorities in Estonia, in organising the related cultural policy and integration and, if necessary, to make corresponding proposals to the Minister of Culture. The Council holds sessions four times a year, the majority of representatives are from Russian cultural societies and the Council has up to 40 members (34 in 2018).

56. Ida-Viru County's Roundtable of National Cultural Societies, established in 1995, operates at the Ministry of Culture as of 2018 (because county governments were eliminated in the course of an administrative reform). Every month the Roundtable organises meetings with social, cultural and political figures, representatives from embassies and foreign NGOs as well as national cultural societies from other regions of Estonia.

57. The budget of the Ministry of Culture funds different national programmes aimed at preserving the cultural heritage of national minorities: Preservation and Development of Places of Worship 2014–2018; Preservation and Development of Places of Worship in Estonia 2014–2018, which helped restore churches and temples; Traditional Cultural Environment of Islands 2015–2019, which also supports Estonian Swedish heritage culture in West Estonia; Peipsiveere Cultural Space 2017–2020, which supports the preservation of the region's cultural heritage in East Estonia with the emphasis on the preservation and introduction of the

cultural heritage of Russians, Russian Old Believers and Votians in the dialect area of Kodavere parish.

58. The Ministry of Culture consistently supports national minorities' professional and hobby theatres, concert organisers, museums, publishing projects and organisation of literary events, festivals and other cultural events of national minorities in Estonia. The state budget has funds for the Russian Theatre and Public Broadcasting organisation's channels and programmes in Russian (ETV+ and Radio 4). Estonian Open Air Museum's Centre of Multicultural Estonia introduces the culture, history and art of the ethnic minorities living in Estonia. In 2015 the museum opened a native farm from Setomaa and a dwelling of an Old Believer fisherman from the Lake Peipus coast. The Centre celebrates the holidays of the Old Calendar and holds several theme days, workshops and fairs introducing different cultures. Integration cooperation activities are also coordinated by the Estonian Folklore Council.

59. As to fine arts, the most funds from the state budget have been allocated to Russian-language theatres, but also to Russian art music bands. The culture of national minorities is introduced through several music festivals, exhibitions and literary and national cultural events. There are Estonian-Russian artist associations in Tallinn and Ida-Viru County and local governments support public music and art schools where studies are also carried out in Russian.

60. There is a Russian Museum, Russian Centre of Culture, Ukrainian Centre of Culture and Jewish Museum in Tallinn. Local governments alongside Lake Peipus have several museums and visitor centres introducing the history and culture of Russian Old Believers, Haapsalu has a Museum of the Coastal Swedes introducing the cultural heritage of coastal swedes and Tallinn has a church museum of the Estonian Swedes in EELK St Michael's Church. The Baltic German cultural heritage is represented by renovated and restored manors, several of which are currently used as tourist centres and schools.

61. Each year there are several festivals, exhibitions, handicraft fairs and literary events held in Estonia for introducing the culture of national minorities, which are widely covered in the media. Operating subsidies from the Ministry of Culture are allocated to the Russian-language studio theatre Ilmarine in Narva and the theatre Windmill operating in Jõhvi, Ida-Viru County.

62. Roundtables and seminars, training and counselling activities are organised for representatives of cultural societies of national minorities and their cooperation with civic associations of other member states is facilitated. Several culture festivals of national minorities have become a tradition in Estonia, such as the Russian culture festival "Slavic Wreath", festival introducing different national cultures "National Cultures Creative Pot" in Ida-Viru County, International Festival of Orthodox Sacred Music "Credo", theatre festival "Golden Mask", Forum of Estonian Jewry "Jahad", Ukrainian cultural festival "Baltic Trembita", Ukrainian youth culture festival "Kvity Ukrainy", and many others.

63. State budget funds are allocated to the development of a Russian-language portal kultuur.info (<https://kultuur.info/>). Kultuur.info is an event calendar which shows cultural events in larger and smaller locations in Estonia. Information about events is available in Estonian, Russian and English. The database of the portal contains brief information about and contact details of over 2000 cultural institutions and organisations. As of the fall of 2014 the portal has a culture blog for edited opinions on cultural events, overviews related to

holidays and theme days, interviews, weekly event suggestions and much more. The blog is in Estonian, English and Russian.

64. There are Russian-language journals of culture “Tallinn”, “Vyshgorod” and “Plug”, publishing houses (e.g. KPD and Aleksandra) publish Russian-language literature, two Russian-language print newspapers and 19 Russian-language magazines are issued. In addition, a number of local government gazettes are issued in Estonian and Russian. Russian-language regional journalism exists practically everywhere in Estonia where there is a numerous Russian-speaking population, more information about Russian-language journalism is presented under Article 9.

65. The state also supports the publication of newspapers and journals of national cultural societies of national minorities in their own languages, such as “Inkeri” in Finnish, “Estlandssvensk” in Swedish, a monthly electronic “Ridna Hata” issued by the Ukrainian cultural society Vodogray and so on.

66. In September 2018 the Estonian Institute launched a new project “Culture Step” which offers study trips, lectures and discussions for non-native residents and immigrants in Tallinn and Harju County. A total of 250 to 300 people are invited to participate in the project. Over the course of more than one year every participant will have a chance to attend five study trips or training sessions. The Estonian Institute’s partners are local cultural institutions and civic associations, and volunteers who are Estonians or proficient in Estonian will also be involved in the project. The project includes events for introducing the culture, nature, history and everyday life of Estonia, study trips which take the participants to locations of cultural history, and provision of general knowledge about Estonia. The “Culture Step” programme is carried out in English and Russian. 150 people were offered the chance to join the programme in 2018. In 2019 groups will continue to be formed.

67. The National Heritage Board supports the restoration of places of worship of all religions. In 2013 the programme “Preservation and Development of Places of Worship” was confirmed to continue from 2014 to 2018. The objective of the programme was to offer state support for the preservation of church buildings and items of cultural value therein, and to ensure the sustainable use and openness of buildings of cultural value. The programme supports the renovation of churches of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church, the Estonian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate, and the Old Believers.

68. The Estonian National Museum located in Tartu acts as an ethnography museum and records the historic and cultural heritage of the national minorities living in Estonia.

Article 6

1. The Parties shall encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons' ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media.
2. The Parties undertake to take appropriate measures to protect persons who may be subject to threats or acts of discrimination, hostility or violence as a result of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity.

Integration policy and designing thereof

The Advisory Committee recommended to continue with wide integration activities and monitor the implementation of the Strategy “Integrating Estonia 2020” in close consultation with national minority representatives.

69. For decades Estonia has dedicated a lot of attention to the integration policy through consecutive integration plans. Their implementation is constantly monitored and new plans are drawn up based on the experience gained in the execution of the previous plan. The implementation of integration plans has greatly contributed to improving cohesion in society, promoting cooperation, tolerance and mutual understanding, and intercultural dialogue regardless of the nationality of the residents and their cultural, linguistic and religious identities. Involving people with different language and cultural backgrounds in social life contributes to the linguistic and cultural diversity in society.

70. Estonia designs its model of a multicultural society through integration programmes and relevant activities. Promotion of integration and contemporary multicultural society and concentration on various aspects in the course thereof evolve over time and take into consideration the changes in society. The Estonian integration process has been founded from the start on subjects, not ethnic groups or language, and it has been aimed at entire society and all residents of Estonia.

71. Two development plans in the field of integration – “Integration in Estonian Society from 2000 to 2007” and “Estonian Integration Plan for 2008 to 2013” – have been carried out in Estonia and currently implementation of – “Integrating Estonia 2020” – is in process. The development plan “Integrating Estonia 2020” was drawn up in cooperation between Ministries and implementing agencies and with the involvement of the public, relying on expert assessments.

72. The integration activities contained in the development plan were designed based on the concept that policies must be carried out on the basis of participation and knowledge, they must rely on open discussion and on as many relevant studies, surveillances and expert assessments as possible, including on the report on the achievement of the objectives of the “Estonian Integration Plan for 2008 to 2013”.

73. In 2018 the Ministry of Culture started preparing a new integration development plan up to the year 2030 and in addition to experts the preparation process will involve cultural societies of national minorities and the wider public. The Government of the Republic is expected to adopt the new development plan in 2020. More details about preparing the plan are available under Article 15.

74. The objective of the current development plan “Integrating Estonia 2020” is socially coherent society where people with different language and cultural backgrounds actively participate in social life and share democratic values. To that end the plan sets out three main lines: 1) increase of the openness of the entire society, including Estonian-speaking permanent residents, and shaping of attitudes to support integration; 2) continued support for the integration of permanent residents whose native language and culture is other than Estonian; 3) support for the adjustment and integration into Estonian society by new immigrants as a growing target group.

75. The integration activities in the current development plan support the active participation of people with different language and cultural backgrounds in forming a socially coherent society. A successful integration process can be achieved, above all, by a voluntary choice and motivation supported by the state and community institutions which in addition to the public sector organisations, including local governments, also involve private sector and civil society organisations.

76. The following are carried out in order to achieve the objectives of the Integration Plan:

- Activities which support active social participation and a stronger common communication space by paying more attention to the regions of Ida-Viru and Harju Counties where there are a lot of people mainly communicating in Russian;
- Activities which help make society more tolerant and open, prioritising extensive cooperation between groups of different nationalities in Estonia and the creation and recognition of open values favouring integration;
- Activities which support active participation and equal opportunities on the labour market;
- Language studies aimed not only at formal studies but also improving proficiency through practical language use;
- Activities introducing opportunities for actually being part of the Estonian culture;
- Activities supporting naturalisation;
- Flexible activities promoting adjustment, aimed at new immigrants.

77. The development plan is executed through implementation plans revised each year, as adopted by the Government of the Republic. An implementation plan includes a description of adjustment and integration activities, the extent of funding provided for such activities and performance indicators and it determines the organisations in charge of such activities. The implementation plan's volume from 2014 to 2015 was 10.7 million euros and from 2016 to 2020 it is 57.7 million euros.

78. Funding of the activities of the “Estonian Integration Plan for 2014–2020” by years (in EUR):

Year	Ministry of Culture	Ministry of Education and Research	Ministry of Justice	Ministry of the Interior
2014	8,051,521	165,000	418,029	1,346,756
2015	6,595,866	164,132	251,166	262,748
2016	10,115,853	184,307	198,637	891,643
2017	10,619,699	179,161	200,793	750,588

79. Volumes of implementation plans of the development plan “Integrating Estonia 2020” applicable in the reporting period by sub-objectives of the integration plan:

Year	Changing attitudes of support integration	of in of	Supporting the participation of slightly integrated people in social life	Supporting the adjustment of new immigrants	Management and monitoring of the Integration Plan
2014	59%		20%	10%	11%
2015	82%		6%	3%	9%
2016	70%		16%	7%	7%
2017	71%		16%	7%	6%

80. For assessing the efficiency of the integration measures the Ministry of Culture commissions after each 3 to 4 years an independent in-depth survey – Integration Monitoring. The last monitoring took place in 2017. The monitoring reflects the national relationships and identities of Estonian residents, their employment, education, value and political preferences, areas of participation and media consumption as well as the adjustment of new immigrants.

81. For the implementation of the integration plan “Integrating Estonia 2020” support is given to the creation of a common information space and raised general awareness of cultural diversity, media activities are carried out which support the introduction of values and attitudes aimed at openness and mutual understanding in society and related values (among others, valuing of cultural heritage, tolerance and equal treatment). Estonian Russian-language public television channel ETV+, launched in 2015, is supported and employers are informed of the importance of equal treatment in personnel policy and of the benefits of a multicultural team.

82. A good example of a dialogue between cultures is discussions on integration held in the Opinion Festival organised in Paide since 2016. The subjects of such discussions have been the concept of Estonian Language Houses and preparations for the measure of providing free language studies for applicants for Estonian citizenship. But there have also been several regional events such as better inclusion of Russian-speaking young people, cultural forums, discussion platform Bazar in Narva and the first Russian-language integration hackathon in Estonia in 2017.

83. Several activities are carried out in Ida-Viru County for including civic associations. A new initiative was to start organising Cultural Forums in Narva and Sillamäe in 2016 for the purpose of creating in Ida-Viru County a wide dialogue platform for cultural, educational and youth work cooperation, increasing social cohesion and launching new development projects in the region. Young people’s own initiatives and youth projects are supported: project competitions, seminars and involvement events, including Erasmus+, and meetings between young people, language camps and student exchanges where young people with different native languages live in Estonian families and vice versa.

84. Attention is paid to the development of cultural services which also support language learning and integration. For example, in 2016, 14 performing arts institutions and museums received a subsidy from ESF funds for project “Activities supporting integration in Estonian society” so they could develop programmes in other languages by way of simultaneous interpretation equipment, smart devices and applications, audio guides and software necessary for their functioning.

85. From 2014 to 2015 the Integration Foundation supported the human rights related development activities of the Estonian Human Rights Centre and “Mondo”, an organisation engaged in development cooperation, humanitarian aid and world education. Conferences on equal treatment have been held, information materials have been published and human rights workshops have been organised in Estonian and Russian-language schools.

86. In December 2015 the Estonian Institute of Human Rights published a study “Linguistic Human Rights”, which mapped the general awareness of linguistic human rights and the behaviour of the target groups affecting it. The study dealt with the integration of the Russian-speaking population from the lawful, linguistic and cultural, media and information consumption as well as foreign and security policy aspects. The conclusions revealed that the

language barrier between Russian-speaking people and Estonians is one of the greatest obstacles in the integration process. 75% of Russian-speaking respondents deemed command of Estonian to be important; the answers were significantly affected by the regions where the respondents lived: 90% of Russian-speaking respondents living in Tallinn considered command of Estonian to be necessary but in Ida-Viru County the same indicator was 54%. The survey also pointed out a connection between scarce language skills and criticism toward the state: the state is negatively seen by those whose command of Estonian is poor and who do not follow Estonian-language media.

87. The Estonian Human Rights Centre has developed training materials for employers, which help promote equal treatment in the working environment. There are plans to create a “Human Rights E-Guide”, a web based tool for identifying human rights violations, increasing the general awareness of human rights and giving people a better understanding of their rights. The Centre offers companies, NGOs and public sector organisations a chance to sign the Diversity Charter. By signing the Charter they confirm that they respect human diversity and value the principle of equal treatment among their employees, partners as well as clients. More than 100 companies and organisations have signed the Charter.

88. Starting from 2015, in April each year companies and organisations across Estonia who have acceded to the Diversity Charter celebrate Diversity Day on the initiative of the Human Rights Centre. In 2017, collaborating with the Estonian Human Rights Centre, the Ministry of Social Affairs developed the concept of Diverse Workplace Label. The Diverse Workplace Label shows that a company is an employer who values diversity.

89. To promote active social participation and the creation of a common state identity, the integration development plan “Integrating Estonia 2020” is implemented through practical joint activities as cooperation and involvement projects (including cultural and sports projects, institutional cooperation projects between organisations from different regions in Estonia and different areas of activity, empowerment of local NGOs for their participation in local level decision-making processes). Support is also given to cooperation between local governments where the percentage of people with Russian as the main language of communication is high and the non-profit organisations of such local governments.

90. In 2015 the Integration Foundation developed a pilot project for young people in Ida-Viru County for the purpose of involving them more in social activities and introducing to them self-realisation opportunities in Estonia; the project was carried out by the Foundation in collaboration with non-profit organisation Ida-Viru Youth Academy. 36 young people completed this pilot project.

91. From 2016 to 2017 the Integration Foundation carried out an awareness raising campaign on a diverse workplace, which targeted Estonian residents with different native languages between 18 and 30 years of age, including Russian-speaking young people whose command of Estonian was at least at the intermediate level and public sector employers – top executives and personnel executives. The purpose was to encourage young people with a native language other than Estonian to apply for a position in the public sector and to explain to public sector executives why it was important to employ more people with a native language other than Estonian.

92. To this end a campaign website www.karjeravestonii.ee, a relevant Facebook page, a campaign section in Russian-language portal Delfi (<http://rus.delfi.ee/daily/career>), outdoor

advertisements and a television show “Shadow Day” were created; the latter portrayed 10 success stories and 10 short videos were made to introduce the shows and the people in the focus of the success stories; tens of articles were written and eight information seminars were held in universities and general education schools, attended by over 400 young people. An additional interactive information seminar was held in June 2017 where another 300 people attended.

93. For the purpose of increasing social cohesion, promoting contact between people with different cultural backgrounds and intensifying the mutual cooperation between Estonian and other language organisations three cultural events and three sports activities were supported and carried out: The Estonian Football Association’s project “We Speak Football 2016” targeted young people from Ida-Viru County and Paldiski who got to experience Estonian football culture first hand and a chance to meet famous Estonian football players. Ida Viru County’s Sports Association organised orientation days for students and teachers in Ida-Viru County schools.

94. In October 2016 Narva hosted Estonian National Opera’s five days long opera and ballet festival “Narva Filled with Music”; more than 200 performers from the National Opera went to Ida-Viru County and over 30 events took place. International festival “Tallinn Music Week” included an international conference dedicated to cultural diversity, freedom of speech and equal opportunities. State budget funds were allocated to a film festival “Meetings with Tarkovsky 2016”, organised for the fifth time already, this time in Tallinn, Maardu, Ida-Viru County, Tartu and Pärnu.

95. With the support from the state, the private sector and private persons, an artistic photo book “We, the Roma” by photographer Annika Haas and Estonian Roma children was compiled in 2018. The book is of high artistic value and a warm and personal insight into the Estonian Roma community, but it is also a valuable material for introducing the Roma culture and minimising widespread stereotypes of the small Roma community. The book was made with the help of the state, the private sector and individuals.

96. Estonian Integration Monitoring reveals that over the past decade the percentage of those who believe that nationality is a big factor in professional advancement has significantly decreased. This indicator has especially decreased for people of other nationalities: from 72% (2008) to 44% (2017). 85% of people of other nationalities find that there is room for various languages and cultures in Estonia. Inequality on the labour market, including in career opportunities, is sensed more by people of younger working age and of other nationalities who have recently entered the labour market. The 2015 Monitoring and 2017 Monitoring show that the attitudes of Estonians towards the involvement of the Russian-speaking population have become more positive and the support of Estonians to the wider involvement of the Russian-speaking population in the management of Estonian society and economy has become stronger.

97. The education system plays an important role in facilitating integration. Nursery schools and higher level schools not only offer language studies but also support wider coping in society. Next to family, friends and the media it is the educational institutions that shape the values of young people and help them better manage their problems in life.

98. Estonian Integration Monitoring also shows that the support of Estonian residents to general education in Estonian is on the rise and most of them (77%) favour partial studies in

Estonian in nursery school. More than three-quarters of residents of other nationalities have found for years that the right time to start learning Estonian is in nursery school. Two-thirds (67%) of Estonian residents prefer the option where children of different nationalities or children speaking different native languages are put together in one group or class.

99. The number of people who see an unfavourable effect in young people with different native languages studying together has clearly declined, which indicates a general increase in the openness of society. Nationality put aside, more than one-half of residents (59% of Estonians and 54% of non-Estonians) find that mixed groups contribute to good academic achievements. A negative effect on the language and culture of national minorities is only seen by every tenth person whose native language is other than Estonian.

100. Estonians in general (81%) prefer mixed groups of children with different native languages and of different nationalities, but they also deem it important for students with another first language not to outnumber Estonians. The percentage of Estonians who are totally against mixed groups has decreased twofold compared to the previous survey (10% in 2015 and 5% in 2017). The option favoured the most by Estonians is an educational institution where up to a fourth of all students speaks another language (30%).

101. Residents of other nationalities have also become more open toward multicultural nursery schools and higher level schools. There is a significantly lower number of people (drop from 21% to 13%) who favour schools and nursery schools where young people of other nationalities dominate. The number of residents of other nationalities who are against mixed nursery schools and mixed higher level schools has decreased threefold (from 12% to 4%). In 2017 Estonian residents of other nationalities preferred common Estonian-language nursery schools where children of other nationalities had access to assistant teachers proficient in their native languages (29%) and language immersion nursery schools (26%).

102. Year by year, the attitudes of people of other nationalities towards the transition to Estonian-language instruction in upper secondary schools, which began in 2007, has become more supportive. 78% of them believe that studying specific subjects in Estonian increases the competitiveness of graduates of Russian-language schools on the job market. A positive change is remarkable compared to attitudes in 2011 as 53% favoured this statement back then.

103. The integration process is significantly affected by the media space. Russian-speaking Estonian residents are simultaneously affected by the local Russian-language media, Russian media and Estonian-language media on a lower level. Over the past decade the assessments of national minority residents of their level of awareness of what is going on in Estonia has approached those of Estonians. For example, there is almost no difference between ethnic groups' awareness of domestic events (85% of Estonians and 83% people of other nationalities deem their awareness good or very good). An opposite trend can be noticed in Russian-speaking people's awareness of Russia: 69% of them deemed it good in 2008 and 63% in 2017. Over the past nine years monitored, the assessments of Estonians have remained steady; the only exception can be noticed in awareness of events in Russia which increased considerably in 2015 in connection with the conflict in Ukraine and tensions between Russia and the Western world.

104. Command of the official language is important for everyone in order to get a better education, job and social position, but it also allows greater access to cultural life and it is the basis of a common information field and communication space. The 2017 Estonian

Integration Monitoring showed that the command of Estonian among residents of other nationalities had somewhat improved.

105. In 2008, 19% of people of other nationalities had no command of Estonian in their assessment but by 2017 this number had decreased to 10%. Compared to 2015 the percentage of people not proficient in the official language had decreased the most in Ida-Viru County by 2017 (30% in 2015 and 22% in 2017). 41% of Estonian residents of other nationalities over 15 years of age consider themselves as having active command of Estonian (fluent in or able to understand, speak and write) and one-half as possessing passive language skills (able to understand and speak a little or able to understand a little and not speak). In general, the attitudes of Estonian people have become mutually considerate over the years. On one hand, less Estonians find that residents of other nationalities should definitely have command of Estonian, but on the other hand, Estonian residents consider the role of having command of Estonian in increasing international trust to be more important than ever. Openness towards other languages grows along with intercommunication: the more contacts and communication between Estonians and residents of other nationalities, the more tolerant and open they are toward other languages.

106. One of the priorities of the development plan “Integrating Estonia 2020” is to systematically develop the communication and information space to increase the awareness of events in Estonia and around the world among the population whose native language is other than Estonian. To this end, support is given to the dissemination of Russian-language information and the translation of websites and newsletters of civic associations into Russian, the collaboration and training of journalists from Russian-language media channels, the activities of Estonian media channels for the Russian-speaking population, and the production of media programmes which cover the integration field, and integration as a bilateral process.

Hate crimes

The Advisory Committee recommends to reconsider Article 151 of the Penal Code and encourages the authorities to establish a data collection system which would record the number of racist or ethnically motivated crimes and incidences of hate speech.

107. In response the Government notes that Estonian legislation in the Penal Code concerning offences against equality (§§ 151–153) has not changed compared to the previous reporting period. The Government has also been criticised in open debate by representatives of Estonian civil society and LICHR for too restrictive wording of the provisions of the Penal Code. The proposals in the recommendations to change the law have been considered at the initiative of the Ministry of Justice and there have been discussions in society, but they have not received enough support.

108. Hate crime statistics from 2015–2017 are based on “Crime in Estonia 2015”, “Crime in Estonia 2016” and “Crime in Estonia 2017” <https://www.kriminaalpoliitika.ee/et/statistika-ja-uuringud/kuritegevus-eestis>).

109. The victim or target of a hate crime is chosen based on a specific characteristic (e.g. race, religion, ethnic origin, nationality, sexual identity/orientation) shared by a group, or another common denominator. If someone is attacked for an actual or supposed characteristic (such as origin or identity), it constitutes a hate crime. Such crimes manifest themselves as various forms of violence or vandalism, including property damage (e.g. ransacking buildings owned by a group, damaging the victim’s property by graffiti, vandalising a car, etc.).

110. In 2015 at least seven cases of physical abuse were registered, motivated by hate. In one case the motive was sexual orientation, other cases concerned racial/ethnic hatred. According to the 2015 victim survey, 3% of respondents or their close family members had dealt with hate crimes. To the question, “Over the past 12 months, have you or has any of your close family members fallen victim to a crime due to your/their ethnic origin, race, skin colour, religion, disability or sexual orientation?”, 2% responded with “Yes, once” and 1% with “Yes, repeatedly”. The survey did not include persons staying in Estonia on a temporary basis. The survey revealed no significant differences based on respondent gender, age, nationality, income or social status when it comes to dealings with hate crimes.

111. In 2016 at least 15 hate crimes were registered, three of which were cases of physical abuse and 10 serious violations of public order. In 63% of the hate crimes the motive for the act was the victim’s actual or supposed race, religion or origin. In 25% of the cases the motive was the victim’s actual or supposed sexual orientation/identity. In one instance the hate was caused by the victim’s disability. In 2016 no crimes of incitement to hatred (§ 151 of the Penal Code) were registered. Two misdemeanours were registered under § 151 of the Penal Code. 25% of all hate crimes were labelled as such by the person conducting the proceedings. In three cases the victims were minors. Those who had fallen victim to hate crimes due to their race, religion or origin were of Nepali, Nigerian, Ukrainian, Brazilian, German and Pakistani origin. In several instances the victim—including persons of German and Dutch origin staying in Estonia—was assaulted because they could not speak Estonian or Russian. In 2016 one criminal offence of a violation of equality was registered (§ 152 (2) of the Penal Code). One hate crime was registered as cruel treatment of animals (§ 264 of the Penal Code) when someone kicked a dog belonging to a person of Brazilian origin with dark skin.

112. According to the 2016 survey, 2% of respondents or their close family members had dealt with hate crimes (compared with 3% in 2015). Of these, 1% had suffered hate crimes “once” and 1% “repeatedly”. Of those who themselves or whose loved ones had fallen victim to a hate crime in 2016, the reason was disability for 24%, race or skin colour for 18%, nationality for 11%, religion for 6%, sexual orientation for 6% and other characteristics for 6%. It must be noted that new immigrants are very unlikely to participate in the survey.

113. Compared to the 2015 survey results, in 2016 there were proportionally slightly more victims of hate offences due to disability (16% v. 24%) than there were cases related to nationality (37% v. 11%) or race or skin colour (16% v. 18%).

114. In 2017 four hate crimes were registered, three of which were serious violations of public order and one of which was a threat. In all cases the motive was the victim’s actual or supposed race, religion or origin. All crimes were committed at a catering establishment, entertainment facility or another public place.

115. In 2017 no crimes of incitement to hatred were registered. 13 cases of incitement to hatred (§ 151 of the Penal Code) were registered; in five of those cases no misdemeanour proceedings were initiated. One person was fined 120 euros for an offence of incitement of hatred. A couple offences of incitement of hatred were associated with activity on Facebook.

116. In the 2017 victim survey, 1% of respondents (out of 1,011) reported falling victim to crime due to their nationality, race, skin colour, religion, disability or sexual orientation. In 2016 the same indicator was 2% (this is within the limits of the margin of error).

The Roma

The Advisory Committee recommended to intensify, in consultation with representatives of the Roma communities, the implementation of measures to combat discrimination against the Roma and promote their full and effective equality in all areas.

117. The Estonian integration plan “Integrating Estonia 2020” notes that the Roma community needs more attention and support to tighten contacts with the rest of society.. Compared to other European Union Member States, the Estonian Roma community is small in number and not an independent integration policy target group, but it still requires special attention in the areas of education, employment and social affairs.

118. According to the Population Register (2018), 649 persons have identified themselves as Roma in Estonia (0.05% of the population). The Roma population is scattered all over Estonia. There are no Roma settlements. The largest Roma communities in 2018 were in Valga Rural Municipality (209 Roma), in Tallinn (70 Roma) and in Tartu (68 Roma). In other local governments the number of Roma people is less than 50.

119. In 2016, an Advisory Committee for Roma Integration was set up at the Ministry of Culture; this Committee is responsible for analysing Roma integration issues and using this analysis to propose to relevant organisations ways of solving such issues and promoting Roma integration.

120. Taking into account the share of Roma in the Estonian population and that the Estonian integration process is based on different fields of life, not ethnic groups or language, Estonia considers it appropriate to continue the implementation of the relevant measures of various policy sectors for Roma as specified in the integration plan. Such measures include the educational and cultural activities, employment matters, social involvement, media activities and so on of different ethnic groups, but not preparation of a separate nationality-based strategy.

121. Priority is attached to cooperation with regional and local level authorities, also NGOs and relevant stakeholders. With the co-funding of the European Commission’s Horizon 2020 programme, in 2017 the Ministry of Culture launched a 12-month project for developing a national network in support of Roma integration. The project activities were aimed at all integration target groups: ministries, local governments and local authorities, above all young Roma people and Roma women.

122. The objectives of the project were to enhance cooperation between stakeholders supporting the Roma integration, identify young Roma people who are interested in active participation in civil society and supporting training for the purpose of becoming a future spokesperson for the Roma community and/or a mediator between schools/local governments and Roma families/Roma communities. The project included a survey among teachers and support specialists working with Roma children and a seminar for sharing best practices among teachers.

123. Another survey was carried out: “Estonian Roma’s sense of belonging and participation in social life”, a network page was set up, four training sessions for 20 and three individual training sessions for three young Estonian Roma were organised and two collaboration

meetings in local governments were held. A total of 132 people attended events, most of them attended various events repeatedly. Similar activities are planned to be continued with. More about the education of Roma children under Article 12.

Article 7

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

In reviewing the fourth report the Advisory Committee made no recommendations in connection with this Article.

124. Estonia's previous reports have given an overview of laws governing the field regulated by Article 7. The amendments to the Law Enforcement Act addressed in the previous (fourth) report took effect on 1 July 2014. No other significant amendments have been made to the Law Enforcement Act in the meantime.

Article 8

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

In reviewing the fourth report the Advisory Committee made no recommendations in connection with Article 8.

125. The principles of freedom of religion are guaranteed in Estonia by the Constitution, the Churches and Congregations Act and other legislation. Previous reports have provided an overview of the legislation to which no fundamental amendments have been made. There are 10 churches, 10 associations of congregations, 75 individual congregations and 8 convents and monasteries operating in Estonia under the Churches and Congregations Act. Religious associations are not required to report to the state the size of their membership or information concerning the nationality of their members.

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

Article 9

1. The Parties undertake to recognise that the right to freedom of expression of every person belonging to a national minority includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas in the minority language, without interference by public authorities and regardless of frontiers. The Parties shall ensure, within the framework of their legal systems, that persons belonging to a national minority are not discriminated against in their access to the media.
2. Paragraph 1 shall not prevent Parties from requiring the licensing, without discrimination and based on objective criteria, of sound radio and television broadcasting, or cinema enterprises.

3. The Parties shall not hinder the creation and the use of printed media by persons belonging to national minorities. In the legal framework of sound radio and television broadcasting, they shall ensure, as far as possible, and taking into account the provisions of paragraph 1, that persons belonging to national minorities are granted the possibility of creating and using their own media.
4. In the framework of their legal systems, the Parties shall adopt adequate measures in order to facilitate access to the media for persons belonging to national minorities and in order to promote tolerance and permit cultural pluralism.

Freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Minority language media

The Advisory Committee recommended to increase efforts to promote Russian-language radio and TV broadcasts.

127. Compared to previous reports no noteworthy changes have taken place in Estonian laws. The freedom to receive and transmit television and radio services is guaranteed by law. There are no restrictions on receiving or transmitting television or radio services provided by other countries.

128. Public radio and television channels are funded from the state budget. The Estonian Public Broadcasting organisation (ERR) broadcasts Russian-language television and radio programmes and Estonian-language television programmes with subtitles. The web portals of the Public Broadcasting relay news in Estonian, Russian and English.

129. On 28 September 2015 the Estonian Public Broadcasting launched a Russian-language television channel ETV+ and in February 2016 a regional studio was set up in Narva for this channel. The channel seeks to align Estonian and Russian-language information spaces by relying on news and analysis thereof, broadcast on television, digital platforms and social networks. The channel offers its original programme, including news, discussion panels, entertainment and sports, more than 20 hours a week.

130. Since the launch of ETV+ in 2016 the popularity of the television channels of the Public Broadcasting among the Russian-speaking population has grown nearly five times, but nevertheless not a lot of time has been spent on watching them. At the beginning of September 2015 the channels ETV and ETV2 were viewed for at least 15 minutes a week by 4.3% of the Russian-speaking population but in May 2018 the channel ETV+ was viewed weekly by 23.7%, i.e. 84,000 non-Estonian speaking people. ETV+ is considered an important source of information by 44% of residents and reliable by 62% of its viewers. About one-half of Russian speakers among the older generations watch ETV+ but less than one-third of Russian speakers under 35 years of age have discovered it; they consider it more important to get their information from Estonian-language web portals than a native language television channel.

131. The top media sources among Russian-speaking residents are television channels of Russia (71%), Perviy Baltiysky Kanal (PBK) (70%) and the Public Broadcasting organisation's Russian-language news broadcast "Aktuaalne Kaamera" (62%). The 2017 survey results outline that the media use of residents of other nationalities mostly revolves around local Russian-language media: 89% of all respondents deemed at least one local Russian-language channel to be important.

132. According to Statistics Estonia, in 2017 there were 19 television channels registered in Estonia, three of which were public channels, one was local and 15 were nation-wide, four had free access and 14 had conditional access and were nation-wide and one was a regional station. An Estonian activity licence was held by three Russian-language television channels in Estonia.

133. By various language groups, the channel watched the most in Estonia is the Estonian Public Broadcasting organisation's (ERR) main television channel ETV followed by Estonian-language private channels Kanal 2 and TV3, which terminated their free-to-air status in 2017. In December 2018, the time spent by Estonians watching the above three channels was 21.4%, 13.5% and 12.7%, respectively. Among non-Estonians the most popular television channels were without a doubt RTR Planeta (14%) and PBK (11.9%) and NTV Mir (10%). The Estonian Public Broadcasting organisation's Russian-language television channel ETV+ comes in fourth among non-Estonians and its percentage among the entire audience has mostly remained below 1% since the channel was launched; in December 2018 it was 0.7%.

134. Practically everywhere in Estonia it is possible to subscribe to foreign channels via cable and digital television. It is hard to estimate the number of available channels because it depends on the television package people choose and the technical means available. The broadcasting of foreign media channels is not restricted in Estonia and television channels broadcast in Russia remain the most popular ones among Russian-speaking residents of Estonia.

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

136. According to Statistics Estonia, in 2017 there were 36 radio stations registered in Estonia, five of which were public (including one Russian-language) and 31 were private stations. Four of the latter were nation-wide, 15 regional, 16 local and one international. The percentage of Russian-language programmes in Estonian radio stations totalled 27.1% in 2017 and it has steadily increased (for example, it was 23% in 2015 and only 6.4% in 1993). An Estonian activity licence was held by eight Russian-language radio channels.

137. The Russian-language radio channel in Estonia which is listened to the most and which produces original programmes is ERR's public radio channel Radio 4. Radio 4 aims to be the most reliable foreign-language radio channel in Estonia, acting as a general interest channel tasked with bringing to the residents with another native language important events from Estonia and around the world. In addition to Russian-language programmes Radio 4 also broadcasts programmes in Ukrainian and Belarusian. Once a month programmes in Azerbaijani, Tatar and Chuvash are aired and three times a month a programme introducing the Jewish culture.

138. According to a Radio Audience Journal Survey conducted by Kantar Emor, in 2017 Radio 4 had on the average 137,000 weekly listeners between 12 and 74 years of age. On the average 85,000 people listened to Radio 4 on a daily basis. In 2017 Radio 4 came in first out of all Russian-language radio channels in both those categories. Radio 4's audience includes

39.9% of people of other nationalities aged between 12 and 74 years and this percentage has increased compared to last year. In this target group Radio 4 has the biggest audience. 46% of residents of Ida-Viru County whose native language is other than Estonian listen to Radio 4.

139. The Estonian Public Broadcasting organisation's development plan for 2019 to 2022 provides that the role of a public media channel and the press as an institution is very important in performing media duties because they ensure a balanced information field for Estonian language space and society. The television channel ETV+ sets an objective to initiate and maintain a dialogue between Estonians and the remaining population with another native language. Furthermore, ETV+ uses the cross media solution which actively involves the audience and contributes to strengthening the state identity. The diversity of the Estonian Public Broadcasting organisation's media system ensures balanced information for the public, joins different sections of society and keeps extremist ideas from amplifying.

140. In 2018 the Government of the Republic allocated additional funds for improving the reception of ETV+. The television channel now covers the entire territory of Estonia and its reception has also improved in Ida-Viru County where in some parts it was not possible to watch that channel before by using a regular antenna. The expansion of the coverage also benefited earlier viewers of ETV+ because the quality of the signal improved considerably. In addition to free-to-air, the programme broadcast by ETV+ is transmitted through various solutions by service providers such as Elisa, Telia and STV. In case of an Internet access it is still possible to watch ETV+, just like other broadcasting channels registered in Estonia, on the web live and by video on-demand.

141. The majority of young members of the audience prefer to get their information and entertainment on the Internet. According to an international digital survey (*We Are Social and Hootsuite*), 97% of the population used the Internet in Estonia in 2018, 90.7% of whom on a daily basis. Along with the steady rise in the number of Internet users the time spent on-line has also increased. On average, six hours a day is spent on the Internet. According to Statistics Estonia, 82% of homes have an Internet access and the most used services are the Internet Bank, the media and e-mail.

142. An increasing role in media consumption is played by social media which, according to the 2017 Estonian Integration Monitoring, has become the most important source of information among young people of other nationalities. In 2018, 55% of the Estonian population used social media and the popularity of this type of media is growing rapidly; in 2018 the growth was especially noticeable among people 65 years of age and older (20%), but among young people up to 24 years of age who had already been using social media the increase was moderate (5%).

143. According to Statistics Estonia, 1041 different periodicals were issued in Estonia in 2017, 83% of them in Estonian and 17% in another language, and 340 different magazines, 86% of them in Estonian and 14% in other languages. 74 newspapers in Estonian and 35 in other languages were issued the same year and there were 12 daily print newspapers, one of them in Russian.

144. Russian-speaking consumers are offered Russian-language services by all the biggest media groups and institutions (ERR, Ekspress Grupp, Eesti Meedia). Four periodic national e-publications are available in Russian: information portal "Delfi", newspaper "Postimees", "MK-Estonia" (also in print) and "Delovyje Vedomosti" (also in print). "Komsomolskaya

Pravda v Severnoi Evrope” is issued in Russian on paper and electronically in Tallinn and distributed in Estonia, Latvia and Finland. Russian-language regional journalism exists practically everywhere in Estonia where there are people whose mother tongue is Russian.

145. The largest publications are “Narvskaya Gazeta”, “Narva”, “Gorod”, “Viru Prospekt”, “Severnoye Poberežje” and “Severnoye Poberežje Ekstra”, “Sillamyaeski Vestnik”, “Panorama”, “Infopress” in Ida-Viru County and “Tshudskoye Poberežje” in Jõgeva County. The most popular municipal newspaper is “Stolitsa” issued in the capital Tallinn. Local governments issue their gazettes in Russian in Ida-Viru County, Harju County and Tallinn. National cultural societies of national minorities also issue newspapers and magazines in their own languages.

146. In addition to the news in Estonian the ERR also publishes news on its website in Russian (rus.err.ee) and in English (news.err.ee). There are tens of other Internet sites which, in one way or another, offer readers information in Russian concerning events in Estonia.

147. Media supervision is exercised through media organisations. Assessments are made on the basis of the Code of Ethics for the Estonian Press. The Estonian Newspaper Association (EALL) aims at defending the common interests and rights of newspapers, proceeding from internationally recognised principles of democratic journalism. The Estonian Press Council established by the EALL in 2002 is a body of self-regulation which offers the opportunity to find extra-judicial solutions in cases of conflict with the media. In addition to representatives of the media the Press Council also includes persons from outside the media. The Press Council has a total of ten members.

148. The Press Council discusses complaints received from readers about materials published in the media. The Press Council may be approached by anyone who feels that they have been portrayed in the media unfoundedly in a negative way. Compared to the court, proceedings in the Press Council are speedy and free of charge. Newspapers are required to publish adverse decisions made by the Press Council. Decisions of the Press Council are to be published as they are, without any comments from the editor’s office. The ERR is required to publish on air adverse decisions made by the Press Council. All decisions of the Press Council are also published on the Internet in the Press Council section of the website of the EALL.

149. A similar competence lies with the Council of Public Word set up in 1991, which is a labour body of the non-profit association Avalik Sõna (Public Word) according to its statute. The members of the non-profit association Public Word are the Estonian Newspaper Association, the Union of Media Educators, the Estonian Consumers’ Union, the Estonian Council of Churches, the Estonian Lawyers’ Association and an NGO, Media Watch, whose representatives belong to the Council of Public Word.

150. The Council of Public Word is not a body administering justice with the aim of punishing the guilty ones, but the Council offers a public discussion on the subject of the media and presents its arguments in specific issues of media ethics either as supportive or adverse decisions. The Council does not seek the sole right to analyse and assess materials published in the media, but it does offer a simple chance for an independent assessment of a case for people who feel they have been wronged by the press. The Council of Public Word also provides a comparison to decisions made by the Press Council, a body of self-regulation established by the Estonian Newspaper Association mainly due to the dissatisfaction of newspapers with the criticism entailed in the decisions by the Council of Public Word. Both

the Press Council and the Council of Public Word proceed from the above-mentioned Code of Ethics for the Estonian Press.

151. Pursuant to the Estonian Public Broadcasting Act, the Public Broadcasting has an ethics adviser who monitors the conformity of the operation of Public Broadcasting with the professional ethics and good practices of journalism, reviews the objections and challenges submitted against the content of a programme or programme service of Public Broadcasting and monitors the balance of the programme service.

Article 10

1. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use freely and without interference his or her minority language, in private and in public, orally and in writing.
2. In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if those persons so request and where such a request corresponds to a real need, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible, the conditions which would make it possible to use the minority language in relations between those persons and the administrative authorities.
3. The Parties undertake to guarantee the right of every person belonging to a national minority to be informed promptly, in a language which he or she understands, of the reasons for his or her arrest, and of the nature and cause of any accusation against him

or her, and to defend himself or herself in this language, if necessary with the free assistance of an interpreter.

Use of minority languages in contacts with local administrative authorities

The Advisory Committee recommended to ensure that persons belonging to national minorities, in areas where they reside traditionally or in substantial numbers, have the effective possibility to use their minority language in relations with local authorities, in writing and orally. It is also recommended that the Language Act be implemented in a flexible way.

152. The general principles of the regulatory framework of using the Estonian language and languages of national minorities have been covered in previous reports. § 6 of the Constitution provides that the official language of Estonia is Estonian. § 12 of the Language Act provides for the procedure of access to public administration in foreign languages. A state agency or local government authority shall respond in Estonian to a document in a foreign language. Should the person who receives the document express a wish to get the answer in a foreign language, the response may be translated into a foreign language at the expense of the person who receives the document. On the agreement between the person who receives the document and the state agency or local government authority the response to the document in a foreign language may be given in a foreign language understood by both parties.

153. Irrespective of the percentage of various nationality groups within a region, national minorities may, in oral communication with officials or employees of state agencies and local government authorities and with a notary, bailiff or sworn translator as well as in a foreign representation of Estonia, use their mother tongue.

154. In use of language, state agencies and local government authorities apply different foreign languages when providing information and most of them have websites in Russian and in English besides Estonian for providing necessary information. In addition to Estonian and Russian, public services are also offered in English everywhere in Estonia.

155. The Language Inspectorate is competent to exercise supervision over compliance with language requirements, ensure the consumers' linguistic rights upon publication of public information and announcements, and verify the quality of language studies for adults. The Language Inspectorate is not a disciplinary institution. The Inspectorate increasingly engages in counselling authorities and employees in matters pertaining to language. Most inspections initiated by the Language Inspectorate are related to complaints by residents. The Language Inspectorate is tasked with verifying that public information is available to everyone in Estonian. If public information is in a foreign language, a translation into Estonian must also be provided.

156. If an inspection by the Language Inspectorate reveals a violation of language proficiency requirements, the person in question is granted a sufficient period of time for improving their language proficiency and passing the language proficiency examination. If over a long period of time the person fails to comply with the obligations imposed on them, a penalty payment may be applied in exceptional cases. The maximum rate of penalty payment is EUR 640. In 2018 the Language Inspectorate applied a penalty payment to 195 people in the average amount of EUR 68.

157. The amount of this penalty payment depends on the relevant circumstances and if the person in question wants to improve their language proficiency it is considered whether there are any language courses in the area that can actually be attended and whether the person's income is sufficient and so on. If a person has attended language courses but has failed the language examination, the penalty payment is applied at a lower rate or the person is released from the payment altogether. In 2018 the Language Inspectorate inspected the language proficiency of 2323 employees and a penalty payment was applied in only 8.4% of the cases.

Article 11

1. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use his or her surname (patronym) and first names in the minority language and the right to official recognition of them, according to modalities provided for in their legal system.
2. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to display in his or her minority language signs, inscriptions and other information of a private nature visible to the public.
3. In areas traditionally inhabited by substantial numbers of persons belonging to a national minority, the Parties shall endeavour, in the framework of their legal system, including, where appropriate, agreements with other States, and taking into account their specific conditions, to display traditional local names, street names and other topographical indications intended for the public also in the minority language when there is a sufficient demand for such indications.

Place names

The Advisory Committee recommended to expand the use of minority language place names along with place names in Estonian.

158. No significant developments have taken place within the reporting period regarding this issue. Also, no legislative amendments have been made. Previous reports have explained the legislation of Estonia and the practice of application thereof.

159. The Place Names Act governs the establishment and use of Estonian place names and the exercise of supervision thereover. The purpose of this Act is to ensure the harmonised use of Estonian place names and the protection of place names of cultural and historical value. The protection of minority language place names covers place names of cultural and historical value, above all, Estonian-Swedish place names on Vormsi and Ruhnu and in Noarootsi and coastal areas in Northwest Estonia as well as place names in Russian in Petseri County and alongside Lake Peipus.

160. In the cities of North and Northeast Estonia, such as Sillamäe, Kohtla-Järve and Narva, there are no cultural and historic Russian names of symbolic value, and the establishment and use thereof under regulatory acts would be misleading. Local governments are competent to establish the place names in their territories and if a local government has not used historic place names as allowed by law, the state cannot intervene in the competence of the local government.

Patronyms

The Advisory Committee recommends to seek appropriate legislative solutions for the registration of patronyms in official personal documents.

161. From the historical perspective, patronyms have not been used as part of personal names in Estonia and it is not an official part of a person's name. Surnames are used in Estonia. The use of names is governed by the Names Act, according to § 3 (1) of which a personal name consists of a given name and a surname. The Act provides for the principles and procedure for the assignment and application of names of natural persons (their personal names) and the bases for the uniform use of personal names of Estonian citizens and aliens residing in Estonia.

162. Regardless, no one is prevented from using a patronym if they so wish. The use of patronyms in private relationships is in no way governed or restricted by law. Persons may also use their patronyms in communication with authorities and local government agencies and when contacting them with various applications and letters that are answered pursuant to general procedure. Moreover, a person may apply to the authorities for use of their patronym in official documents as part of their name, i.e. their additional name. Lack of legal recognition of patronyms does therefore not prevent the factual use of patronyms, including in official documents.

Article 12

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

3. The Parties undertake to promote equal opportunities for access to education at all levels for persons belonging to national minorities.

The Advisory Committee recommended to introduce bilingual classes and schools and to pay attention to intercultural dialogue in education.

163. The Estonian educational system also allows the acquisition of an education in schools funded from the public budget in other languages besides the official one. Russian-language education is available in municipal, state and private schools at all levels: preschool, basic school and upper secondary school as well as in vocational educational institutions and some institutions of higher education. A school will organise language and cultural teaching for students acquiring basic education whose native language is not the language of instruction, provided that no fewer than ten students with the same native language or with the same language of household communication request it (§ 21 (5) of the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act).

164. Organisation of language and cultural teaching is governed by the Government of the Republic Regulation No. 116 of 19.08.2010. If less than ten applications have been submitted for the organisation of language and cultural teaching, the school shall decide the conduct of language and cultural teaching in cooperation with the rural municipality or city government (§ 3(2) of the Regulation), but this option is not widely used. There are several reasons for it: representatives of national minorities are scattered around, children of members of cultural societies do not study in the same school and it is difficult to gather a requisite number of students in one specific region to create the possibilities for taking an elective subject, and there are also not enough national culture teachers who would meet the requirements for qualification. That is why people prefer to study their native language unofficially—in Sunday schools of national cultural societies.

165. Nearly 40 Sunday schools have been registered in Estonia, teaching the children of different nationalities the culture, language and traditions of their country of origin. The state provides funding for Sunday schools and training of teachers in Estonia and in respective countries of origin, and helps them get to know Estonian culture. In the academic year 2014/2015 the Integration Foundation funded the work of 23 Sunday schools, in 2015/2016 the work of 29 Sunday schools and in 2017/2018 the activities of 30 different Sunday schools in the total amount of 135,713 euros.

166. General principles concerning education have not changed since the last reporting period. Below is an overview of promotion of a common educational system of Estonia that, among other things, is aimed at dealing with the issues raised by the Committee.

167. OECD's Education at a Glance (2018) points out that children in Estonia have very fair opportunities for acquiring primary and basic education compared to other countries, and that in Estonia the family's social or economic standing or parental educational attainment does not affect their children's participation in early childhood education.

168. To help new immigrant children acquire an education the University of Tartu carried out a project **AMIF2016-12** (the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund's project) "**Supporting New Immigrants in Adjusting at School**". The aim of the project was to support new immigrants in adjusting to the Estonian educational system through the purposeful and coordinated activity of the school community. The project relied on school values: tolerance,

friendliness and cooperation, and it was aimed at teams composed of members of the management and the support system, teachers at different levels of education, representatives of parents and education officials from local governments. The team developed a schooling concept, corresponding study materials and feedback and monitoring materials. There were also training sessions “Uniting Class – Uniting School” (24 h) for four groups (25–28 people in a group), attended by a total of 100–112 people.

169. Under the Constitution, Education Act, the Preschool Child Care Institutions Act, the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act, the Private Schools Act, the Vocational Educational Institutions Act, the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act and the Acts governing universities, all persons staying in Estonia legally and all beneficiaries of international protection or persons seeking international protection have the right to acquire an education on the terms and conditions provided for in the above Acts, and access to education does not depend on a person’s language, cultural or ethnic background or religious beliefs. Provisions of law governing access to education have not changed compared to previous reporting periods.

170. With the help of the European Social Fund the Ministry of Education and Research carries out a programme “Promotion of Adult Education and Development of Learning Possibilities” and organises free training courses. The courses take place at vocational educational institutions and institutions of professional higher education where vocational training is offered. Funding is also given to projects for improving adult access to education; for instance, such projects enable preparation courses, e-courses, hiring of support workers for schools, provision of babysitting services. Furthermore, the Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning is applied upon admission to an educational institution and completion of a curriculum as well as finishing vocational studies.

Education of Roma children

171. Estonia implements inclusive school principles, and there are no schools or classes in Estonia that differentiate between students based on social, ethnic or other characteristics. According to the Population Register (2018), 649 persons have identified themselves as Roma in Estonia (0.05% of the population). The Roma population is scattered all over Estonia. There are no Roma settlements. The largest Roma communities in 2018 were in Valga Rural Municipality (209 Roma), in Tallinn (70 Roma) and in Tartu (68 Roma). In other local governments the number of Roma people is less than 50.

172. As with all other children living in Estonia legally, Roma children are ensured equal access to quality education and are fully included in the common Estonian education system. Roma children study according to common national curricula at schools with Estonian or Russian as the language of instruction, alongside students speaking Estonian or Russian as their mother tongue.

173. A student’s mother tongue or the language used at home, as reported by the child or a parent, is entered in the Information System of Estonian Education. Thus, the mother tongue or first language is determined by a person’s own choice. According to the Population Register, in 2018 there were 62 Roma children of compulsory school age (7–16 years).

174. According to the data of academic year 2017/18, 55 students of general education schools have identified themselves as speaking the Romani language at home. Of those 55 students, 50 study at a regular school on the basis of the national curriculum of basic schools,

three study at a regular school on the basis of the simplified curriculum of basic schools, and two study at a school for children with special educational needs on the basis of the simplified curriculum of basic schools. At the upper secondary school level no students have identified Romani as their native language

175. In 2014–2016 the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Social Affairs carried out a joint project called “**Improvement of quality of study counselling aimed at new immigrant children and Roma children**”.

176. The objective was to improve the study counselling services aimed at teachers teaching Roma and new immigrant children and to improve their competence and support availability of such services at the local level. The project included supervision seminars for teachers, heads of schools, specialists at counselling centres and representatives of related authorities. These seminars were attended by 242 specialists. To establish a sustainable counselling system that would continue after the end of the project, refresher training was provided to 73 study aid and counselling centre specialists. As part of the project, Foundation Innove’s website created a page dedicated to non-native speaking children and to the subject of study counselling for students of Roma origin (<https://www.innove.ee/oppevara-ja-metoodikad/muu-kodukeelegalaps/>).

177. The project resulted in greater confidence for schools when working with Roma and new immigrant children. In 2017 the Ministry of Culture launched a 12-month, European Commission-funded project to develop a national network supporting Roma integration. The project activities were aimed at ministries, local governments and local authorities— and particularly young Roma people and Roma women. The main objectives of the project were to encourage cooperation between stakeholders supporting Roma integration, identify young Roma people interested in active participation in civil society, and support trainings to create future Roma community spokespersons, supporters of Roma children’s education, and cultural interpreters who can communicate between schools/local governments and Roma families/Roma communities. The project also included a survey among teachers and support specialists working with Roma children and a seminar for sharing best practices.

Pre-school education

178. Pre-school education can be acquired in pre-school child care institutions (nursery schools). Local governments have the obligation to provide all children 1.5–7 years of age in their administrative areas with a possibility to attend child care institutions if their parents wish so.

179. Pursuant to the Preschool Child Care Institutions Act (§ 8), learning and teaching at a preschool institution (children up to 7 years of age) shall be conducted in Estonian. This may also be conducted in another language on the basis of a decision of the local government council. At a preschool institution or a group thereof where learning and teaching is not conducted in Estonian, Estonian language instruction is compulsory to the extent specified in the national curriculum for preschool child care institutions. Under the national curriculum for preschool child care institutions, learning Estonian is free of charge for children whose native language is not Estonian.

180. At a preschool institution or a group thereof where learning and teaching is not conducted in Estonian, children who have turned three years of age will start learning Estonian either:

- 1) Through separate language activities;

- 2) By integrating language learning with other activities;
- 3) By applying partial language immersion.

181. Full language immersion may be applied when teaching Estonian to five-year-old children. If learning and teaching is conducted in Estonian in a group, children whose home language is not Estonian will acquire Estonian either through:

- 1) Integrated activities which may be accompanied by support study in Estonian;
- 2) The application of complete language immersion.

182. When planning the expected results of Estonian language learning, the level of development and age of children and the volume and method of Estonian language learning are taken into account. If necessary, an individual development plan is drawn up for children with special needs for teaching them Estonian as a second language.

183. According to the Estonian Education Information System, Estonia has 628 nursery schools, the language of instruction in 516 of them is Estonian, in 106 it is Russian and in 6 English. Preschool institutions where the language of instruction is Russian are generally located in cities and regions where the Russian-speaking population accounts for over 40% (Ida-Viru County and Harju County, incl. Tallinn). The language immersion programme is participated by 4.9% of children going to nursery school; 78.2% of children are in groups with Estonian as the language of instruction and 17% with Russian (data of academic year 2017/2018 in the Estonian Education Information System).

184. The Estonian Society Integration Monitoring 2011 revealed that 80% of respondents with Russian or another language as the native language prefer Estonian language instruction to start in nursery school. According to 2013–2017 data in the Estonian Education Information System, the percentage of children whose native language is Russian has increased in nursery school groups where the language of instruction is Estonian and decreased in nursery school groups where the language of instruction is Russian.

185. **Table:** Children in preschool child care institutions by languages of instruction in academic year 2017/2018 (source: database Haridussilm)

Language of instruction	Number of students
Estonian	52,345
Estonian (language immersion)	3,214
English	89
Russian	11,247
Total	66,895

186. For the purpose of developing an action plan for teaching Estonian as a second language in nursery schools, the relevant study materials, refresher training and hindrances in teaching Estonian as a second language were mapped in 2017. The main deficiencies were in the availability of nursery school refresher training and study materials. The analysis resulted in Estonian language training and counselling for nursery schools in which language immersion was applied. However, the training needs of teachers of Estonian as a second language and teachers in nursery schools where the language of instruction was Estonian or another language were not covered. The analysis resulted in proposals and an action plan for enabling Estonian language study materials and refresher training.

187. The national curriculum for preschool childcare institutions is associated with the national curriculum for basic schools. Estonian language levels are marked with language level indicators (pre A1, A2). Tallinn University and the University of Vaasa worked together to develop an international module for making language immersion more efficient at universities. During 2016–2018 a British Council programme was implemented to support learning Estonian as a second language in Ida-Viru County’s nursery schools and to contribute to networking. Foundation Innove was involved in planning refresher training in 2017–2018 for teachers in language immersion groups, groups with another language of instruction and groups for teaching Estonian as a second language.

188. As of 2009 state funds are allocated to local governments for Estonian language training in nursery schools (children 3 years of age and older).

Article 14

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

Basic education, vocational education and higher education

The Advisory Committee recommended to ensure flexibility in transfer to Estonian as the language of instruction in upper secondary schools and to consult with representatives of national minorities.

Basic education

189. The legislation governing basic education has not changed significantly compared to the previous reporting period. Transfer to 60% of studies being conducted in Estonian has been completed and it is working well; earlier discussions in this matter have subsided. Now it is the vocational education that awaits the same transformation.

190. **Table:** Full-time students in academic year 2017/2018 (source: database Haridussilm)

Language of instruction	Number of students
Estonian	95,876
Estonian (language immersion)	7,099
English	520
Finnish	66
Russian	22,188
Total	125,749

191. Likewise primary education, one can also see increased interest in the language immersion programme in general education and the number of students in said programme has more than doubled in a decade. In 2008 the programme included 3295 students from general education schools and 4907 students in 2013/2014, but in 2017/2018 the number had increased to 7099. The purpose of the language immersion programme is to ensure that students make good progress in all subjects according to the national curriculum and that they are functionally proficient in Estonian, Russian and at least one foreign language. What has made the programme a success is extensive training provided to teachers and heads of school on the subjects of methods of teaching in another language, change management and development of the school environment.

192. General education schools in Estonia have slightly over 400 students who are new immigrants. On average, up to 50 students from elsewhere enrol in Estonian schools in an academic year. Foundation Innove as well as universities offer teachers refresher training and counselling so that they could support their students' development. During first three academic years students are provided intense Estonian language training to help them fit in in Estonia, all the while upholding their native languages. Activities are carried out for organising language and cultural studies based on the individual needs of new immigrants. Different studies on this subject have been conducted¹.

Vocational education

193. In the academic year of 2017/2018, there were 33 vocational educational institutions in Estonia, of which 26 were in state, three in municipal and four in private ownership. Vocational education can also be acquired in six state institutions of professional higher education. The language of instruction in one vocational educational institution is Russian (3%), in 14 both Estonian and Russian (36%), in one said languages are Estonian, Russian and English and in one institution Estonian, English and Latvian. There are 22 institutions with only Estonian as the language of instruction (56%).

194. **Table:** Share of students by the language of instruction in vocational education in academic year 2017/2018 (source: database Haridussilm)

Language of instruction	Number of students
Estonian	19,102
English	6
Latvian	
Russian	5,035
Total	24,143

195. Attention must still be paid to the quality of Estonian language training in vocational schools with Russian as the language of instruction. In 2018 the Integration Plan set a goal according to which persons who acquire vocational education in Estonia shall be proficient in Estonian based on their level of education and qualification requirements and shall be

¹ Non-Estonian speaking children in Estonian schools, Tallinn University, Toomela, a. et al, 2012 <http://dspace.ut.ee/handle/10062/40681>

Academic and social coping of new immigrant students in Estonian general education schools, MindPark 2013 http://dspace.ut.ee/bitstream/handle/10062/41933/Uringuaruanne_MindPark.pdf?sequence=1

competitive on the Estonian labour market. In the academic year 2014/2015, gradual transfer to Estonian as the language of instruction started in vocational educational institutions.

196. Pursuant to § 57 (1) of the Vocational Educational Institutions Act which took effect in 2013, at least 60% of studies based on vocational secondary education curricula shall be conducted in Estonian by no later than 1 September 2020. This aim is based on the 2011 reform of general education where the same aim has already been achieved. This does not concern private schools. This provision governing the mandatory language of instruction only concerns vocational secondary education. The language of instruction of other curricula shall be decided by the manager of school.

197. In 2013 all the national curricula of vocational secondary education were renewed. It included the social subjects module (for example, learning outcomes and assessment criteria concerning cultural diversity, human values and democracy and sustainable development).

198. This provision governing the mandatory language of instruction only concerns one type of studies – vocational secondary education. The language of instruction of other curricula shall be decided by the manager of school. In case of a curriculum in which the language of instruction is other than Estonian, the instruction in Estonian shall be mandatory to the extent provided for in the school curriculum, which ensures proficiency in Estonian at a level necessary for working in the acquired profession.

199. Sub-activities of activity 8.8 “Additional Language Training in Vocational and Higher Education” of 2014–2020 project “Development of Education Corresponding to Labour Market Needs” help students who are acquiring a vocational or higher education to learn academic and professional Estonian and foreign languages, and provide counselling to the heads and staff of vocational educational institutions in coping with a multilingual and multicultural study environment. In the framework of students of vocational education studying general and professional Estonian as a second language, the needs of vocational educational institutions are taken into account and students whose native language is other than Estonian are provided, based on their needs, additional Estonian training, including those studying in Russian-language study groups. This is to support the transition to Estonian-language instruction in vocational secondary education. The needs are mapped on the basis of Estonian examination results in basic and secondary schools and language requirements provided by professional standards.

200. Language training is organised as practical work in an Estonian-language environment; for example, in vocational educational institutions with Estonian as the language of instruction, by way of additional classes, courses or extracurricular activities (student exchange, cultural programmes, study trips, etc.), or as combined study. This all will result in improved proficiency in Estonian as a second language of students and better coping of non- Estonian speaking students (including new immigrants) in affected schools (increased satisfaction of members of the teaching staff and students and improved learning outcomes).

Higher education

201. In Estonia it is possible to acquire a higher education in Estonian, Russian or English in 20 educational institutions. The language of instruction is mostly Estonian; in the academic year 2016/2017, 86% of first and second level students studied in Estonian, 12% in English and 2% in Russian.

202. **Table:** Share of first and second level students by languages of instruction in academic years 2012/2013–2017/2018 (source: database Haridussilm)

Language of instruction	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Estonian	92%	92%	90%	89%	87%	86%
English	4%	6%	7%	9%	11%	12%
Russian	4%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%

203. As a result of the higher education reform in 2013, full-time students acquiring a higher education on the basis of Estonian-language curricula have the right to study in public universities and state institutions of professional higher education free of charge as of the academic year 2013/2014. Full-time students are those who complete, on a cumulative basis, 75–100% of their curriculum. Institutions of higher education have the right to require students to compensate for their educational expenses in part to cover credit points not gained if they get less than 30 credit points each semester. Universities are also free to offer studies with no tuition on the basis of, for example, English-language curricula.

Article 15

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

Consultation with national minorities and participation of national minorities in cultural life

The Advisory Committee recommended to expand the consultation structures for minority representatives beyond the cultural sphere, including participation in politics.

204. According to the Constitution, supreme political authority is exercised by people through elections of the Riigikogu and referendums. Any citizen of Estonia who has attained 18 years of age is eligible to vote in the elections of the Riigikogu. In 2017 the Riigikogu lowered the minimum age to be eligible to vote in elections to local authority councils to 16 years of age. Estonian and EU citizens may vote and stand in local elections. Aliens who reside in Estonia on the basis of a long-term residence permit or the right of permanent residence also have the right to vote in elections to local authority councils.

205. The right to belong to political parties is held by Estonian citizens with active legal capacity who are at least 18 years of age and European Union citizens who are not Estonian citizens but reside in Estonia on a permanent basis. A party is a voluntary political association of citizens the aim of which is to express the political interests of its members and supporters and to exercise power. Although only Estonian citizens may stand in elections to the Riigikogu, other rights of such persons to express their political views and opinions are not restricted.

206. Individuals and civic associations are given the possibility to directly participate in running the state through the participation web. Draft legislation is published in the E-justice environment.

207. In Estonia everyone has the constitutional right to form societies, associations and clubs, protect their interests and freely express their beliefs. The applicable Non-profit Associations Act establishes rights and opportunities for cultural activities. Said Act does not restrict the right to belong to directing bodies of associations based on citizenship or nationality. Pursuant to § 26 of the Non-profit Associations Act, members of the management board may be any natural person with active legal capacity, and under § 17 of the Foundations Act, the residence of at least one-half of the members of the management board must be in Estonia or other Member State of the European Economic Area (EEA) or in Switzerland. The requirement that the residence of at least one-half of the members of the management board must be in Estonia or other Member State of the EEA or in Switzerland was repealed on 15.01.2018.

208. According to the 2017 Integration Monitoring, membership in an association or society is scarce across all sections of society – 83% of Estonians and 87% of Estonian citizens of other nationalities do not belong to any association and 92% of residents with undetermined citizenship are not a member of any society or association.

209. In the 2017 Integration Monitoring the state identity was determined by supporting Estonia as a nation state, on one hand, and as a civic state, on the other hand. As to Estonian Russians, the strong state identity is regarded as support for the symbols and principles of the Estonian nation state, but as to Estonians, as the readiness to involve members of national minorities in Estonian society on the principle of equality. The analysis of the Integration Monitoring results reveals that four-fifths of Estonians and people of other nationalities hold a strong or moderate state identity.

210. Compared to the 2015 Integration Monitoring, the perception of inequality among residents of other nationalities had significantly decreased by 2017. One saw greater opportunity to be involved in politics, local life and civic associations. 90% of Estonians found that the state of Estonia protected their rights and offered them public benefits; this opinion was shared by 79% of people of other nationalities (74% in 2015). It must be noted that assessments of participation in political activity do not differ between Estonian citizens and stateless persons of other nationalities. A positive aspect is that over the past few years the percentage of people of other nationalities who find that they are unable to influence society has decreased by eight percentage points (61% in 2015).

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

212. In 2014 the Government of the Republic approved an integration development plan “Integrating Estonia 2020” and its implementation plan for 2014–2020. The Ministry of Culture, which is in charge of coordinating said area, reports annually to the Government of the Republic on the execution of the implementation plans.

213. Eight ministries and the Government Office contribute to the execution of the development plan. The strategic management of the Integration Plan involves collegial bodies—the steering committee and steering group of the Integration Plan, comprising representatives of local government representative organisations and civic associations, including advisory bodies of national minorities.

214. The steering committee of the Integration Plan is tasked with proposing, if necessary, through the Ministry of Culture, to the Government of the Republic amendments to the development plan “Integrating Estonia 2020” and its implementation plan and with initiating the integration plan for the next period. The steering group of the Integration Plan is tasked with gathering, on a regular basis, data on the execution of the implementation plan as well as related strategies and with analysing, on a regular basis, the development of the integration and related processes, sharing information with the parties executing the development plan and benefiting therefrom and with the public.

215. The implementation of the Integration Plan is discussed at meetings of the Cultural Council of National Minorities on a regular basis and proposals by the Council are taken into account in the planning and execution of activities.

216. For the purpose of drawing up the current development plan “Integrating Estonia 2020”, bilateral meetings were held between the Ministry of Culture and other ministries and authorities within their areas of government to determine connections between the activities of different political spheres. Discussion seminars in Estonian, English and Russian were also held with the representatives of the target group (national minorities) to get an overview of their needs and potential political challenges.

217. The development plan was drawn up in five central stages:

1. Mapping of the situation: 15 working groups gathered and analysed information concerning the previous activities in the integration sphere, the current situation, most important problems and results. Additional integration discussions were held with citizens of third European countries for the purpose of involving this target group in the shaping of the new Estonian integration policy.
2. Development of the concept: the discovered needs served as the basis for priority areas, courses of action, objectives and vision.
3. Development of solutions: measures necessary for reaching the results and connections with other development plans were mapped, and the target groups of activities and the expected results were defined.
4. Drawing up the implementation plan: the financial resources, schedule and possibilities for executing activities were coordinated with relevant ministries.
5. Drawing up the final document of the development plan. The development plan and its implementation plan for 2014–2017 were drawn up and coordinated with relevant ministries.

218. The preparation of the development plan was supported by a group of experts in the field and scientists. Besides expert opinions the development plan also considered individual inputs which anyone could contribute in Estonian, Russian and English through a website opened during the preparation of the plan.

219. In 2018 the drawing up of a new integration development plan “Integrating Estonia 2030” was started and initial discussions with related ministries and other partners were held, including with representatives of cultural societies of national minorities, and in January 2019

an extensive vision seminar was held with the participation of over 100 persons involved and interested in integration. Public consultations across Estonia are continued this year and everyone can participate in drawing up the plan through a public website.

220. 2019 includes plans for assessing the effects of the previous development plan and for writing the text of the new development plan. According to initial agreements the four main subjects are connection with the state, contacts between communities, economic coping and more efficient Estonian learning, and recurring subjects in the plan are education, a common information space and new information technology solutions.

221. The development plan is planned to be discussed in the Riigikogu and adopted by the Government of the Republic in 2020.

222. In 2018 the Ministry of the Interior started preparing a new Civil Society Programme 2021–2030, which continues the current Civil Society Development Plan 2015–2020. Drawing up a new plan included activity seminars and discussion seminars focusing on the future and possible solutions. At the end of 2018 there were discussions and workshops in seven locations across Estonia on the future of civil society. A contribution was given by a hundred active people from NGOs and the public and business sectors from Pärnu, Narva, Paide, Tartu, Viljandi, Tallinn and Kuressaare. Representatives of national minority organisations and Estonian residents of different nationalities were invited to and attended those discussions.

223. In 2019 the development of a cultural policy development plan “Culture 2030” was started for the period from 2021 to 2030. As a new source document a clear vision of the development of culture will be created and the focus will lie on horizontal subjects, meaning subjects that integrate all areas of culture, including national minority cultures. Discussions on horizontal subjects will be held first. Every subject will be inspired by a host who will frame the horizontal subject, guide the discussion and share results with other hosts and make sure that the most important results make it to the document. In addition to horizontal subjects the Ministry of Culture is planning meetings between the focus group and important partners in the cultural sphere and representatives of universities and related ministries.

224. Everyone had the chance to register on-line to said subject discussions and invitations were sent to the Cultural Council of National Minorities and national cultural societies. An invitation to the meeting of one subject group is sent to 50 people. All others have the chance to express their opinion in writing on the website of the Ministry of Culture. Discussions will be held in the first half of 2019, results will be presented and the text will be written at the end of 2019 and the approval of the document is scheduled for the first half of 2020.

225. In 2018 the former Integration and Migration Foundation “Our People” was renamed to the Integration Foundation. The Foundation still aims to initiate and support activities aimed at Estonian society integration among Estonians and non-Estonians and to initiate and support activities related to immigration. As of 2019 the Foundation is situated in Narva in Ida-Viru County.

Participation in economic life

The Advisory Committee recommended to address the employment rate among persons belonging to national minorities and to take broader measures, beyond language training, in mostly affected areas.

226. The situation on the labour market has steadily improved over the past five years. From 2014 to 2018² the employment rate among people 20 to 64 years of age increased from 74% to 78.8%, which is one of the highest rates in the Member States of the European Union. Employment increased among Estonians and non-Estonians. By 2018 the employment rate of Estonians had increased from 76.2% to 80.4% and of non-Estonians from 69.2% to 75.2%. Over five years the employment gap decreased from 7% to 5.2%. The employment rate of non-Estonians is lower in Northeast Estonia (Ida-Viru County), where unemployment is high and vacant jobs are scarce. At the same time the employment rate of Estonians and non-Estonians in Tallinn is over 80%. The employment rate of non-Estonians is greatly affected by the age structure because the percentage of people 50 to 74 years of age among the population of working age is significantly greater for non-Estonians (47%) than Estonians (36%).

227. The employment rate has increased and the unemployment rate has decreased: from 7.4% in 2014 to 5.7% in 2018. The highest unemployment rate is 12.3% in Ida-Viru County but a tendency toward decrease can be seen here as well. Over five years the unemployment rate decreased by 1.3 percentage points. And the unemployment rate among non-Estonians decreased faster: from 10.3% to 7.3%. The unemployment rate among Estonians decreased from 6% to 4.9% and the unemployment gap to 2.4 percentage points. Unemployed non-Estonians can be mostly found in two regions: 46% live in North Estonia (including Tallinn), where unemployment is the lowest, and 45% in Northeast Estonia, where unemployment is the highest. At the same time as general unemployment also unemployment among young people and long-term unemployment decreased.

228. Along with general unemployment, the registered unemployment has also decreased. 31,081 unemployed persons were registered with the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund as at 31.12.2018. Compared to the beginning of 2014, registered unemployment has decreased by 13%. The registered unemployment rate has decreased from 5.7% (31.01.2014) to 4.8% (31.12.2018). The number and percentage of unemployed persons who cannot speak Estonian as a proportion of all unemployed persons has also decreased from 32.3% (31.03.2014) to 23.5% (31.12.2018). 7298 persons who cannot speak Estonian were registered as unemployed persons at the end of 2018, which is 36% less than at the beginning of 2014.

229. The employment rate is predicted to increase further over the next few years, which is supported by higher age entitling to old-age pension and the application of the work ability reform. On the other hand, the work ability reform may also cause increased unemployment because more inactive people head to the labour market.

230. From May 2016 to the end of 2018, the Employment Programme 2017–2020 provided an aid for creating jobs in Ida-Viru County to help people who had lost their jobs in the region to find work and decrease the high regional unemployment. This aid was given to employers who gave jobs to at least 20 unemployed people within two months. A total of 645 jobs in 17 companies were created by way of this aid. As a sequel to the aid for creating jobs in Ida-Viru County, a new regional aid for creating jobs was developed and it is offered to regions where the unemployment is the highest, including Ida-Viru County, as of the beginning of 2019. The aim is to contribute to the economic development of such regions and to decreased unemployment; this aid consists of a wage subsidy and compensation for training

² Average of I to III quarter in 2018.

expenses. Aid is given to employers who employ at least five unemployed persons within two months.

231. In addition to national measures the Government of the Republic approved in 2018 additional measures for the Ida-Viru County Programme, which aim to reactivate the economy in Ida-Viru County and increase the attraction of the region's living environment, reduce the escape of young people and eliminate backwardness compared to other parts of Estonia by prioritising the development of the region. The Ida-Viru County Programme comprises nine activities contributing to the development of Ida-Viru County and covering various areas, and the planned Programme budget for the period 2018 to 2022 is 23,600,000 euros. The largest contributions are made to industrial enterprise (14,390,838 euros), which involves jobs with higher average wage, and to small enterprises/diversifying enterprises (4,609,162 euros), which involves higher business activity and jobs mainly in the tourism and service sectors.

232. In 2018 a support measure for investments of the largest industrial enterprises was launched. Remaining activities are in the process of being prepared by contract partners and they will become available to the applicants step-by-step in 2019. Since a large part of the activities contributes to the development of the enterprise environment, the expected results will become gradually apparent approximately 2 to 3 years from now.

233. Ida-Viru County Programme activities:

- Support measure for investments of industrial enterprises
- Estonian and English language studies for entrepreneurs and key personnel in companies
- Counselling and training related to entrepreneurs' development, export and introduction of new technologies
- State co-funding of Viru Film Fund
- Initiation and development of nationwide sporting and cultural events
- Support for the activities of business and start-up incubators, development of the ecosystem of start-up companies
- Additional funding to projects in the backup list of the support for strengthening the competitiveness of Ida-Viru-County's regions
- Initiation of a support measure for solving the problem of apartment buildings becoming empty
- Support for the execution of important activities and investments of the County's development strategy

234. The Estonian Regional Development Strategy includes Southeast Estonia and Ida-Viru County activity plans for 2015–2020, the monitoring of which includes profound monitoring of the development of those regions. Within the European Social Fund's priority course's "Improvement of access to the labour market and prevention of removal therefrom" measure "Labour market services for ensuring better opportunities for participation in employment", 25 projects have received funding from September 2015, the aim of which is to promote the employment and staying on the labour market of the target groups with the lowest competitiveness.

235. The total volume of the projects is eight million euros. Within the framework of regulation "Services increasing professional competitiveness", which took effect in May 2018, it is possible to support projects which offer people who are not working nor studying

and whose main language of communication is not Estonian work practice in an Estonian-language working environment with mentoring and additional activities for finding employment. There are two projects focused on Ida-Viru County, the activities of which are aimed at increasing the competitiveness of young and long-term unemployed persons.

236. For helping young people with no special skills or work experience to find a job, the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund has been providing a service “My First Job” as of the beginning of 2015, which means that employers are partly compensated, by way of wage subsidy, for the labour expenses of a young employee during their first year of employment and for professional training expenses (up to 2500 euros) during the first two years of employment, provided the employer has entered into an employment contract with the employee for an unspecified term or for a term of at least two years. The target group is young people 17–29 years of age who have been registered as unemployed for at least four months, who have no professional education and who have short-term work experience or none at all. For the purpose of preventing unemployment among young people, workshops for introducing the labour market and work life are arranged in schools for students in grades 8– 12.

237. For helping people of other nationalities enter the labour market and find a job the state continues providing individual labour market services. According to the Unemployment Insurance Fund, in 2014 labour market services were used by 15,785 people whose language of communication is other than Estonian, in 2015 by 15,874 people, in 2016 by 16,913 people and in 2017 by 18,121 people. 18,551 unemployed persons used labour market services in 2018. The percentage of people who used labour market services among registered unemployed persons whose main language of communication was not Estonian was 37.2% in 2018 (on average per month). The most popular services were labour market training (24%), career counselling (18%) and job-seeking workshops (14%). Labour market services are funded from the foundation of labour market services and benefits.

238. The Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund provides labour market services provided for in the Labour Market Services and Benefits Act, the Employment Programme and the European Social Fund’s programmes. Various services are provided based on a person’s individual needs and hindrances. The law considers insufficient or lacking Estonian language proficiency to be a hindrance (§ 10 (5) 8) of the Labour Market Services and Benefits Act). Unemployed persons are offered Estonian language courses to improve their language skills. In 2017 a programme “Work and Learn” was launched to also allow employed persons to learn Estonian. The number of participants in Estonian courses has varied from 1120 in 2014 to 2793 in 2017. In 2018 Estonian language training was provided to 1506 unemployed and 1525 employed persons. The “Work and Learn” programme also supports employers helping their employees improve their Estonian proficiency (435 persons in 2018).

Article 17

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

In reviewing the fourth report the Advisory Committee made no recommendations in connection with Article 17.

239. Estonia participates in seven European Territorial Cooperation and one European Neighbourhood Instrument programme 2014–2020 funded from the budgets of the European Regional Development Fund and participating countries. The programmes are divided into cross-border cooperation (Estonia–Latvia, Estonia–Russia, Central Baltic), interregional cooperation (INTERACT III, Interreg Euroopa, ESPON 2020 and URBACT III) and international cooperation (Baltic regional) programmes. The Estonia–Latvia, Estonia–Russia and Central Baltic programmes also fund so-called soft cooperation activities for which funding may be applied. Eligible applicants are state, regional and local authorities; authorities equal to the public sector; national organisations; non-governmental organisations; non-profit associations and foundations; educational and research institutions; small and medium-sized enterprises.

240. Cross-border cooperation between Estonia and Russia is a success, primarily within cooperation programmes co-funded by the EU. Estonian–Latvian–Russian cross-border cooperation programme 2007–2013 included Estonia, Latvia and Russia and 45 projects received aid in the amount of 48 million euros. The Estonia–Russia cooperation programme 2014–2020 continues the funding of cross-border projects. The aim of the Estonia–Russia cooperation programme is to support the development and competitiveness of boundary regions. The programme budget is 34.2 million euros; the majority of funding comes from the European Union, Estonia’s contribution amounts to 9 million and Russia’s to 8.4 million euros.

241. The cooperation programme helps to fund five large cross-border infrastructure projects, which are funded to the extent of 20 million euros: 1) development of the small enterprise of the Southeast Estonia and Pskov regions, also related to border crossing; 2) socio-economic and environmental development of Lake Peipus, including water tourism and small-craft harbours, wastewater treatment equipment in the Pskov region; 3) reconstruction of the Narva–Ivangorod Fortress; 4) reconstruction of the Narva–Ivangorod promenade; 5) reconstruction of the Luhamaa Shumilkino border crossing points.

242. There are also various cooperation projects between Estonia and Russia for student and teacher exchanges between different universities. Russia is one of the priority destinations of Study in Estonia; in the academic year 2017/2018 Estonia hosted 283 students from Russia.

243. Estonia has made agreements entailing cultural provisions with more than 50 countries across the world (including the Russian Federation). Co-operation agreements and programmes allow developing and supporting bilateral co-operation with foreign countries and their cultural authorities. Often, co-operation is mediated by embassies with the active participation of the Ministries of Culture of the two countries. In case of effective agreements and programmes, the cooperation and funding of two countries allows to organise bigger events which would otherwise not be possible. Activities within the framework of agreements and programmes are supported on the basis of the principle of reciprocity. For events taking place in Estonia the expenses of entertaining guests from abroad are covered by Estonia and the relevant travel costs are covered by the partner country and vice versa. Subsidies from the Ministry of Culture are combined with other sources of funding in Estonia.

244. The support programme of the Ministry of Culture for umbrella organisations of national minorities allow organisations to use state funding for promoting international cultural and educational cooperation. A new state funding source document took effect in 2019; it is the Minister of Culture regulation No. 24 “The conditions and procedure for supporting umbrella organisations of national minorities” of 31.12.2018, which imposes on the beneficiary the obligation to organise international cooperation and ensure active cultural and educational contacts with the countries of origin of the ethnic cultures belonging to their organisation.