

Estonia

[EESTI VABARIIK]

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COUNTRY FACT SHEET

- **Population** 1,340,415 (2009),
70% live in urban areas
- **Area** 45,228 sq.km
- **Population density** 30.9 inhabitants per sq.km (2007)
- **System of government** Parliamentary, representative democratic republic
- **European elections** 6 European parliamentarians

▪ **Social security and welfare system**

Social security is a social insurance granted by the state in case of certain social events (death, loss of a provider, old age, professional incapacity, birth of a child) which provides for additional income or continuity of sources of income to be secured, at least at the level that enables life acceptable with regard to human dignity. Social security is financed out of compulsory taxes or payments, as well as voluntary payments. The source document for the social services policy development drawn up by the Ministry of Social Affairs in 1999 is already concerned with the implementation of social policy measures as an investment, in people and through people, in the economy and society as a whole. The welfare instruments (procedures) may be both social benefits as well as services. (Ministry of Social Affairs, www.sm.ee)

▪ **Public health system**

Estonian health insurance relies on the principle of solidarity: the Health Insurance Fund covers the cost of health services incurred in by the person in case of illness regardless of the amount of social tax paid by the person concerned. The Fund uses the social tax paid

for the working population also for covering the cost of health services provided to those who have no income deriving from work activities. The purpose of health insurance in Estonia is to cover the costs of health services provided to insured persons; prevent and cure diseases; finance the purchase of medicinal products and medical technical aids; provide the benefit for temporary incapacity for work and other benefits. Health insurance is applicable since 1992. (Health Insurance Fund, www.haigekassa.ee)

▪ **Level of education**

- 20-24 years old who have completed secondary schooling 2008: 82.2%
- 25-64 years old who have completed secondary schooling 2008: 88.5%

▪ **Immigration rate**

2008: 0.3%

▪ **Growth rate**

2008: 0.048%

- Births 1.195% of population
- Deaths 1.243% of population

▪ **Employment rate**

2008: 69.1%

- 15-64 years old (total - male- female) 2008: 69.6% - 73% - 66.4%
- 55-64 years old (total - male- female) 2008: 62.2% - 64.9% - 60.1%

▪ **Unemployment rate**

- 2008 I quarter: 4.2%
- 2009, I quarter: 11.4%
- 15-64 years old (total - male - female) 2009: 5.6%- 5.9% - 5.4%

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PRAXIS is the first independent not for profit think tank in Estonia, founded in the year 2000. The mission of PRAXIS is to improve and contribute to the policy-making process in Estonia by conducting independent research, providing strategic counsel to policy makers and fostering public debate. According to partners, PRAXIS is characterised by good quality and unbiased research, the ability to show long-term influences of policies and the ability to talk about “complicated things” in an interesting and understandable manner.

Through a scientifically sound approach and international cooperation, PRAXIS has acquired a notable role in helping to plan and improve policies in many fields: governance and civil society policy, social and labour policy, education policy, health policy, innovation and economic development policy. PRAXIS involves the best policy experts in their respective fields and takes part in several international networks. Depending on the policy situation, PRAXIS carries out ex ante or ex post policy analysis, organises discussions, raises public awareness or trains people.

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Glossary

1 DEFINITIONS

VOLUNTEERING ACROSS EUROPE

1.1 VOLUNTEER

The term volunteer is not defined in any official document.

1.2 VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITY

An activity that is done out of free will, is not obligatory nor forced; does not provide any monetary nor material benefit; is done outside one's own home, family and relatives for the benefit of others or the society in general (in the public interest).

(Development Plan for Civic Initiative Support 2007-2010, not defined in the legal system)

1.3 VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION

Organisation founded by physical or legal persons for not for profit goals. It must be a citizen-initiated organisation, not an organisation founded or ruled by the public sector, including the local government.

1.4 VOLUNTEER SUPPORT CENTRE

The phrase is not defined in any official document.

2 VOLUNTEERS ON VOLUNTEERING (INTERVIEWS)

Volunteering is seen by the interviewees as part of active citizenship. It is defined as "*stepping outside one's own box*", "*implementing your energy in favour of society*", "*an opportunity to have a completely different line of activi-*

ties and dive into a new environment compared to a working career.” Even though “more and more people want to be volunteers” and “the youth are especially eager to act”, the potential of volun-

teering has not been exploited enough, because it is difficult for organisations to find human and financial resources for coordinating volunteers.

Historical overview

VOLUNTEERING ACROSS EUROPE

1 BACKGROUND, EVOLUTION AND DISTINCTIVE TRAITS

In Estonia, civil initiative free of political control took its first serious steps during the loosening of the Soviet regime called *Perestroika*, in the second half of the 1980s. The re-emergence of civil initiative and civil society in present-day Estonia has not gone smoothly. The Communist period, lasting almost fifty years, has left its mark on people's memories, value judgements and behavioural patterns. For people born deep in the Soviet era, volunteering, doing something for someone other than oneself and one's own relatives, does not come naturally. This needs a change in values and attitude towards the country and the local community. Younger people born in the 1980s or later have not been affected by the Soviet regime and are very open to self-discovery and self-realisation through active citizenship, if this possibility is presented to them.

2 ROOTS: BEFORE 1900

Many student unions and fraternities had been founded since 1870 to create circles among university students where Estonian identity was formed and preserved during the difficult times, before gaining independence from the Russian empire in 1918. Many of the student unions are still active and play a role in citizens' education. The common guiding principle is patriotism: being a good citizen for the country.

Citizen-initiated grass-roots voluntary associations played an important role in gaining national independence through cultural activities. Choirs and orchestras were set up, Estonian language schools were founded, writers' associations developed written Estonian language and organised the collecting and publishing of Estonian folklore. The first national theatre *Vanemuine* was set up, followed by the first national song festival in 1869, creating a tradition that is still a very important part of Estonian identity.¹

3 THE BRIEF CENTURY: 1900 - 2000

In an ever tenser atmosphere, the revolutionary movement (National Awakening, *Ärkamisaeg*) in Estonia reached

¹ Estonian Institute, *Encyclopaedia Estonica*, www.estonica.org

its height in the autumn of 1905. Over 20,000 industrial workers and railway workers in Estonia, i.e. about three-quarters of their total number, took part in the all-Russian general political strike in October. Within one week (12-20 December), the bands of workers and peasants, mostly in North Estonia, destroyed, burnt down or looted about 160 Baltic German manor houses (i.e. one out of five) and 40 distilleries. Estonian high culture developed under the direct impact of the St Petersburg academic and modernist cultural life. The group called *Noor-Eesti* (Young Estonia), founded by young writers Gustav Suits, Friedebert Tuglas and others, called upon Estonians to create a European culture without any German and Russian mediation and to move from the national to the universal. The members of this group sought direct contacts with Western Europe and with Romance, Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian cultures. On 24 February 1918, during the military interregnum, the Rescue Committee published the manifesto of the Committee of Elders: *Manifesto to All Peoples of Estonia*. The manifesto declared Estonia a democratic republic within its historical and ethnic borders, which would be neutral in the Russian-German conflict.

The foundation for Estonian independence lay in the people's strong desire for self-determination and their own state. On the other hand, the world-wide economic crisis of 1929 brought along the strengthening influence of extremist movements: national socialists, fascists. This in turn destabilised Estonia's extremely liberal political system and highlighted the need for constitutional reform. The collapse of democracy and the emergence of an authoritarian power in Estonia and in other young East European countries have been explained by the lack of traditions of civic culture and the insufficient experience of political democracy. The regime of personal power, called "a balanced state order and a guided democracy" by the government ideologists, remained relatively moderate, compared to others of its kind in Europe. The Estonian cultural life in the 1920s was characterised by the general tendency towards professionalism. As a result, various professional associations were established, such as the Estonian Writers' Union, the Central Association of Estonian Applied Artists

(1922), the Estonian Academical Music Society (1924).

Together with the establishment of the occupation, a guerrilla movement started in Estonia, which was part of the anti-Soviet guerrilla warfare in Eastern Europe and lasted 12 years from 1944 to 1956. Between 1944 and 1956, there were about 14,000-15,000 armed guerrillas, the Forest Brethren, as they were called, but they did not all act together. After the guerrilla movement had been stamped out in the 1950s, resistance was most pronounced in cultural life. Besides intellectuals, the radical youth also protested against the Russification and discrimination of Estonians. In the late 1970s, dissident activity intensified considerably. People sent letters to the United Nations and Western governments, pointing out the violations of human rights and the occupied status of the Baltic countries.

A vast civic movement called Singing Revolution, that gradually gathered strength in 1988, can be seen as the re-birth of voluntary activity after 50 years of Soviet communist regime in Estonia. Hundreds of thousands of people participated in public events, where patriotic songs were sung; they wanted freedom of thought and expression and their own independent country. The biggest event, called The Baltic Chain, gathered about 2 million people holding hands that formed a human chain through the three Baltic countries: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The song "Wake up Baltic Countries" became an unofficial hymn creating a feeling of community among the three countries. They all had the same goal: independence. In 1990, the Estonian Congress was formed by citizens with the aim of re-establishing the independence of the Estonian Republic by official citizens on the basis of a legal continuity. The Congress based its activity on the constitution enforced in 1938, according to which the higher power belongs to the Estonian people. In order to restore the structures destroyed during the Soviet occupation, the Congress organised the legal registering of Estonian citizens and the issuing of identity cards through Citizen Committees based on civic initiative.²

In 1996, the legal bases for founding and running not for profit organisations were set up. By 1998, over 4,000 associations and 140

² Estonian Institute, *Encyclopaedia Estonica*, www.estonica.org

foundations were registered in the national register. The number of organisations was estimated to be bigger, since some active groups were not officially registered. The main source of income was membership fees; in small towns and rural areas, the local government was among the most important funding resources. The new channels for participation were open mainly to the richest members of society and regions. A few not for profit organisations (NPOs) met the pre-conditions needed for offering social services.³

4 WHERE WE STAND: 2001 - 2008

In 2002, the Estonian Parliament, *Riigikogu*, adopted the Civil Society Development Concept, which defines the mutually complementing roles of public authorities and civic initiative, as well as the principles of their cooperation in shaping and implementing public policies and building up civil society in Estonia. The Civil Society Development Concept laid the foundation for many advances: in 2003, the Ministry of Interior created a position responsible for civil society development and for coordinating the implementation of the concept, a second position was added in 2007; Good Engagement Practices were drafted in 2005; a National Plan for Civic Initiative Development 2007-2010 was set up with a separate budget for implementation; regional development and support centres were established in every county; the Civil Society Fund was created to partly replace the Open Society Institute funding, that was the main resource for civil society development until 2007; the government's participation portal, www.osale.ee, was launched for carrying out public consultation processes. In 2008, took place the first large cross-country voluntary event, called Let's Do It!,⁴ to clean up the forests from garbage, involv-

ing 50,000 people, followed in 2009 by brainstorming sessions to find solutions for neighbourhood and community development. Due to the lack of resources, especially in smaller municipalities, volunteers have acquired an important role in public service delivery, to respond to the growing needs in community development, sports, culture and social services.

5 VOLUNTEERING NOW (INTERVIEWS)

According to the interviewees, the role of volunteering in Estonia is small, but constantly becoming more important. Volunteering has been developing quickly during the last years, as one of the interviewees put it: *"Today in Estonia the role is diminutive, we are talking about a 2 to 4 year-old baby that is still an infant we want to bring up and towards whom we have a very positive attitude. But the big fathers in the public and business sectors cannot imagine that this baby can grow into an equal partner. Maybe some of them can, but most cannot."*

Volunteering gives more caring citizens, broadens the outlook, educates people, keeps the unemployed and retired active, builds social bonding capital (group-feeling), enhances intergenerational cohesion and can be used to find a new line of activity or a new work. Investment in volunteers can have an up to 5 times bigger return, in monetary terms. Volunteering could be a practical part of the education system and societal studies, giving young people the possibility of not just talking and discussing, but also acting to improve their country. Stepping outside the everyday study, work or family routine and doing something for the community could be an indication of a healthy functioning society.

³ *The Institutionalization of Civic Initiative in Estonia: The Organizational Structure and Resources Summary of Research 2005*, Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations, www.ngo.ee/orb.aw/class=file/action=preview/id=11897/MTYreportSummaryFINAL.doc

⁴ www.teeme2008.ee

Legal framework

1 OVERVIEW OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS

VOLUNTEERING ACROSS EUROPE

Not for Profit Associations Act (*Mittetulundusühingute seadus*), 1996, amended 20 times. It regulates founding, membership, management, dissolution, merging and devising.

Foundations Act, (*Sihtasutuste seadus*), 1996, amended 15 times. It regulates founding, management, accounting and supervision, amendment of articles of association, dissolution, merging and devising.

Act on Obligations, 2002. Civil law contract of joint activity between the founders of non-registered organisations.

Procedure for Preparing the List of Not for Profit Associations and Foundations Eligible for Income-Tax Incentives and Procedure for Establishing Commission of Experts and its Work Organisation, (*Tulumaksusoodustusega mittetulundusühingute ja sihtasutuste nimekirja koostamise kord ning asjatundjate komisjoni moodustamise kord ja tööko-raldus*), 2002, amended 2 times.

Act on Trade Unions (*Ametiühingute seadus*), 2000.

In general, the legal environment is favourable to NPOs. Organisations operate freely and the freedom of assembly and civic activism are ensured by legislation. Registration of an NPO, reporting and other communications with the authorities can be completed online. NPOs do not pay taxes on their income, but on wages. Further information on the fiscal benefits available to NPOs is illustrated in the section on Fiscal policies.

1.1 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

1996 - Not for Profit Associations Act; Foundations Act.

2000 - Law on Trade Unions.

2002 - Law on Obligations; Procedure for Preparing the List of Not for Profit Associations and Foundations Eligible for Income-Tax Incentive.

2004 - NPOs are no longer eligible to a VAT refund on European funded projects.

2006 - A change in the tax legislation redefined NPOs qualifying for tax exemption, thus clarifying which organisations are acting in the public interest.

2007 - Amendments to the Acts on Associations and Foundations were drafted and presented to the NPO community for comment during the summer. These amendments intended to clarify some previously unclear details con-

nected with NPO management.

2008 - Decision to make public after 2010 all not for profit associations' annual reports. Associations are currently the only legal bodies in Estonia who do not present their annual reports to the public registry, but to the Tax and Customs Board, where the public has no access to them. This long-needed change will make the sector more transparent and will help to remove defunct organisations from the public registry.⁵

1.2 NORMS SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering has not been separately defined in the Estonian legal system, but volunteers and organisations involving them operate in the legal framework of the third sector and labour market in general. Civil law contracts, in the form of authorisation agreements or contracts for services, can be signed between volunteers and organisations to agree on responsibilities from both sides and cover expenses related to volunteering activity. In 2005, Volunteer Development Estonia (VDE) concluded that Estonia needs to:

- Provide a legal definition of volunteering.
- Define the legal status of volunteers so that it is distinguished from other types of contracts with individuals.
- Provide legal mechanisms for compensating the costs related to volunteering, so that the organisations could avoid additional tax burdens.

2 PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC POLICY MAKING

The Technical Rules for the Drafts of Legislative Acts (1999) make it compulsory to describe in the explanatory notes who the act was

sent to for approval of opinions and suggestions; the results of the consultation; the table of suggestions not taken into account by each consulted party with a relevant explanation.

The Good Engagement Practices⁶ (2005, not obligatory) is a partnership and cooperation document, which includes eight recommended principles, placing great importance on the clarity of goals, openness of relationships, and dedication to goals. The Good Engagement Practices are a basis for not for profit organisations and government institutions to work out more specific engagement directives for themselves, as well as to find answers to questions that arise in the practice of engagement. The principles are:

- Clarity of the goals of engagement.
- Determination of the parties with whom to consult in the given field and commitment to take into consideration their wishes, needs, and distinctive features.
- Engagement from the early stages.
- Detailed plan for engagement.
- Assurance that the public, interest groups, and those possibly affected by the strategic document will be informed.
- Interim summary of the course of the engagement.
- Announcement of the results.
- Assessment of the engagement and results.

The Estonian Civil Society Development Concept (*Eesti Kodanikuühiskonna Arengu Kontseptsioon*, EKAK) is a document that defines the mutually complementing roles of public authorities and civic initiative, the principles of their cooperation and the mechanisms and priorities for cooperation in shaping and implementing public policies, as well as building up a civil society in Estonia. EKAK was developed by voluntary organisations and adopted by the Estonian Parliament in December 2002.

For the implementation of EKAK, a joint committee of 22 representatives from the public and not for profit sectors was assembled,

⁵ USAID Estonia reports: www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/ngoindex/2008/estonia.pdf

⁶ See also: The official website of the Government of Estonia, Engagement Practices, www.valitsus.ee/?id=5603

chaired by the Minister of Regional Affairs. The committee started in October 2003, organising its work in three groups: a working group on involvement, consultation, policy appraisal and legislation; a working group on funding and statistics; a working group on awareness, civic education, media and infrastructure.

The working groups turned EKAK's objectives, principles and priorities into a specific implementation plan for 2005-2007, complete with 11 goals. Every two years, the Estonian Parliament organises a public hearing on its implementation, the first one was in January 2005, thus providing governance for the whole process. Thanks to EKAK, not for profits organisations set not only the agenda for sector, they set the agenda for society in general.

Goals deal with the following issues:

- Establishment of structures to increase cooperation between the government and CSOs (civil society organisations, i.e. not for profits) in developing civic initiative.
- Clear mechanisms for the involvement of CSOs in the development and implementation of policies and legislative acts.
- Overview of different forms of civic engagement and appropriate legal environment for the support of civic initiative.
- Effective usage of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) for the involvement of citizens into the decision-making processes.
- Transparent and clear funding schemes targeted to support the development of civil society and CSOs from the state budget.
- Improved and targeted system of tax benefits and charitable giving.
- Overview of umbrella organisations, their current and possible future role in cooperation with the public sector.
- Adequate and informational register of not for profit organisations, as well as improved data collection methods describing civic engagement.
- Educational institutions to foster the development of caring and responsible citizens, who value participation and volunteering.
- Infrastructure and networks supportive of civic engagement and

civic initiatives.

- Various opportunities for life-long learning accessible to everyone.

Problems with the EKAK implementation

At the end of 2006, the Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations (NENO) conducted an audit for the Joint Committee and identified three main problems in implementing EKAK: lack of political interest; poor quality and poor implementation of the activity plan due to insufficient financial and human resources (the budget for the Committee was allocated from a supplementary budget of approx. 130,000-190,000 Euros a year); unclear roles and responsibilities of both the Committee and its members, especially from the side of the public sector (the Ministries were represented by officials who usually didn't have the power to make decisions in the name of their Ministry). Due to the lack of government funding, the NPOs represented in the Committee had to find the resources often on their own, if they wanted the work to get done (e.g. many activities were funded by Baltic-American Partnership Programme). Furthermore, because of the limited resources, the working groups within the Committee had to fulfil two contradictory roles, being at the same time responsible for implementing the activity plan and evaluating the implementation.

In 2007, the principles and membership of the Committee were revised; as a result, the new committee is smaller in number, but composed of higher level officials. It includes representatives of 10 umbrella organisations, business and trade unions, as well as chancellors (the highest state officials in Estonia) of the Ministries of Finance, Social Affairs, Education, Culture, Economic Affairs, as well as the deputy-chancellor of the Ministry of Interior. The Minister of Regional Affairs chairs the Committee. In addition, a representative of the Estonian Parliament and two government foundations (Enterprise Estonia and the non-Estonians Integration Foundation) also sit on this Committee.⁷

⁷ NENO-Network of Not for Profit Organisations, www.ngo.ee

Achievements

- Employment of two additional officials within the Ministry of Interior, under the Minister of Regional Affairs, who are responsible for civil society development (in the period 2003-2007 there was only one official working on these issues).
- Code of Good Engagement Practices. For implementing the code, officials in every ministry were appointed, whose direct responsibilities included involving the public in the decision-making processes. These people supervise the implementation of the Code of Good Engagement Practices in their respective ministries and help both government officials and not for profit organisations in the matters of involvement.
- Launch of government's participation portal, www.osale.ee, which allows civil society groups and individuals to post comments about the ongoing consultation processes, while the ministries can provide the public with draft laws and background materials, as well as post polls.
- Principles for Funding Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) from State and Local Government Budget (transparent, accessible, effective funding in public interest that supports capacity of CSOs) adopted by the government.
- Code of Good Practice on Public Service Delivery (being developed).
- Establishment of regional development centres in every county, providing free, broad-based consulting to NPOs and basic trainings at an affordable price.
- Launch of the Civil Society Fund, financed from state budget, that supports the development of not for profit organisations and innovative programmes for civil society development. The mechanisms of public funding through ministries are currently under review, in order to harmonise the system.
- Amendments to the Not for Profit Associations Act that will

make the annual reports of NPOs accessible in the public registry from 2010, thus making the sector more transparent and accountable.

- Amendments to the Income Tax Act which, among other things, also specifies the public benefit (charity) status of not for profits for tax incentives.
- Initial development plans for voluntary work and civic education.
- Research on civil society issues; analysis for civil society policy input; training programmes for both the public and the not for profit sector.⁸

3 FISCAL POLICIES

NPOs do not pay taxes on their income, but on wages. Donations to organisations included by Government regulation in the list of NPOs eligible for tax benefits can be deducted from a person's taxable income up to a certain amount. To be eligible for the tax benefits, an organisation must be charitable and operate in the public interest, not in the interests of a small closed group. Based on information provided by the organisation and after consultation with an advisory committee consisting of representatives from other NPOs, the Tax and Customs Board decides whether or not an organisation is eligible. Not for profit associations and foundations created by the national or local government institutions are not treated as civic initiative organisations and they do not qualify for tax benefits.⁹

4 ROLLS AND REGISTERS

National Register for Associations and Foundations. For all not

⁸ For more information on EKAK-Estonian Civil Society Development Concept, see www.ngo.ee/1030

⁹ NENO-Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations, NGO Sustainability Index, www.ngo.ee/7332

for profit organisations that cannot be operated on unregistered civil law partnership basis, need to open a bank account for legal person, apply for specific funding, etc.

National List of Not for Profit Associations and Foundations Eligible for Income-Tax Incentive.

For organisations acting in the public interest, not in the interest of a small closed group. Organisations can apply for registration as a charity eligible for income tax exception. This status entitles the organisations for tax-free cost recovering related to receiving guests, organising youth camps and workshops (catering, accommodation, transport and entertainment). Registered charities can also give tax-free stipends for study and scientific work, as well as creative and sports activities. Individual and organisations' donations for registered charities are tax deductible for the donator up to a certain limit. The main requirement for being registered as a charity is that the organisation has to operate in the public interest and its business activity should constitute less than half of the organisation activity.

5 LIST OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Specific acts for not for profit organisations

Not for Profit Associations Act, 1996, and its modifications.

Foundations Act, 1996, and its modifications.

Procedure for Preparing the List of Not for Profit Associations and Foundations Eligible for Income-tax Incentive and Procedure for Establishing Commission of Experts and its Work Organisation, 2002, and its modifications.

General acts regulating also not for profit organisations

Value Added Tax Act (*Käibemaksuseadus*)

Income Tax Act (*Tulumaksuseadus*)

Law of Obligations Act (*Võlaõiguseadus*)

Acts for other social partners

Law on Trade Unions (*Ametiühingute seadus*)

Collective Agreements Act (*Kollektiivlepingu seadus*)

Collective Labour Dispute Resolution Act (*Kollektiivse töötüli lahendamise seadus*)

Volunteers involving organisations

1 ORGANISATIONAL FORMS

VOLUNTEERING ACROSS EUROPE

According to the Constitution, all citizens have the right to belong to associations and clubs, protect their own interests, express common opinions and be involved in common activities to create a better living environment. Estonian laws allow choosing between three organisational forms: not for profit associations, foundations, civil law partnership. The first two are officially registered in a national register, the third is an unregistered form of activity that a certain group of people has agreed on and may have signed a common civil law partnership contract. Not for profit associations can be founded both in the public and in the members' interest, while foundations do not have members. All three forms of organisations can earn income, but profit cannot be distributed among founders or members, it can only be used for the main activity of the organisation. In associations, the most important decisions are taken by the general assembly; in foundations, by a management or supervisory board. In civil law partnerships, partners have the freedom to decide on the forms of management.

Table 1 Differences among organisational forms

	Not for Profit association	Foundation	Civil Law Partnership
Founders	At least 2 natural or legal persons	Legal or natural person with active legal capacity	At least 2 natural persons, having not officially registered form or contract
Management bodies	General assembly, management board	Management board, supervisory board	Management board, if regulated by the contract
Members	At least 2	No members	At least 2
Changing statutes	General assembly decision voting at least 2/3 in favour	Decision of founders, supervisory board in some circumstances ¹⁰	No statutes, only the contract can be changed by the partners
Auditing	Not compulsory	Compulsory	Not compulsory

¹⁰ Such circumstances are: if the founders are dead; if the founders have not been able to update the statutes in reasonable time in order to take into account the changed circumstances; if the right is granted to the supervisory board according to the statutes.

There are no differences in the way the three forms of organisations can involve volunteers. Differences occur across the roles of the organisations: offering public services (social, cultural, educational, community development services, especially on municipality level, paid by the national or local government institution); developing certain activities in the public interest with financial support of the national or local government institutions (support and project grants); giving expert advice in planning and implementing regulations and development plans; advocacy and representing interest groups in planning and implementing regulations and development plans; operating in the interests of members.

Organisations offering public services have to ensure that the volunteers' activities meet quality requirements for the services. Depending on the public service, special education may be needed (e.g. for psychological counselling) or special training may be necessary (e.g. running cultural or sports events). Thus the organisations may not be open to all people interested in volunteering and they may need special long-term and regular commitment to sustain the services. Advocacy and giving expert advice on preparing new legislation or development plans requires a specific set of experience and skills (policy analysis, argumentation, negotiation etc). Neighbourhood development may not need any special skills (e.g. repainting the village cultural centre, cleaning parks and forests) and all volunteers can join or leave the events as they like. The aforementioned roles of organisations serve public interests, but other organisations operate mainly in the members' interests. Student unions often offer possibilities only to their members and some of them may have special selection principles for new members based on gender, education or other features.

2 RULES AND FUNCTIONING

Not for profit associations are obliged to report annually on their activities and finances, hold an annual general assembly to approve the annual report or take other decisions that are not in the jurisdiction of the management board. Each association can decide on its

own, through its founders or the general assembly, the minimum quorum for holding the general assembly and the procedure to be followed when less than the minimum number of members come to the general assembly. The general assembly can take decisions if more than half of the participants votes in favour. Statutes can be amended with 2/3 of participants voting in favour. Foundations differ here, as they do not have members and hold a supervisory board meeting instead of a general assembly. The meeting can be held if more than half of the board members participate and decisions can be taken when more than half of the participants is in favour. Civil law partnerships require all partners to vote in favour to take decisions that are outside the partnership's ordinary activities. If a majority voting requirement has been established in the partnership contract, the majority has to be based on the number of members.

3 RELATIONSHIP WITH PUBLIC SECTOR

3.1 OVERVIEW

The public sector does not distinguish between volunteer involving and not-involving organisations, for what concerns the relationship. Both are considered as part of the civil society or the third sector. Not for profit organisations have the following roles in relationship with the public sector:

- Offering public services: social, cultural, educational, community development services, especially on municipality level, paid by the national or local government institution.
- Developing a certain activity in the public interest, with financial support from the national or local government institutions (support and project grants).
- Giving expert advice in planning and implementing regulations and development plans.
- Advocacy, representing interest groups in planning and implementing regulations and development plans.

Volunteers have an important role in organisations offering pub-

lic services. Thus the public sector has realised that using volunteers is an option for cutting costs, but some public officials have not understood that coordinating, instructing and training volunteers cannot be an unpaid job, if the aim is to provide high-quality public services.

In addition to membership fees, there are the following main funding resources available to Estonian not for profit organisations that use local, national or European funds:

- Local and national government institutions.
- National Foundation of Civil Society (www.kysk.ee).
- Open Estonia Foundation (www.oef.org.ee).
- Enterprise Estonia Foundation (www.eas.ee).
- Estonian Agricultural Registers and Information Board (www.pria.ee).

3.2 FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW (INTERVIEWS AND QUESTIONNAIRES)

Among the most important needs of the organisations, for what concerns the relationship between volunteer involving organisations and the public sector, is to find a sustainable funding model for volunteer coordination and covering costs related to volunteering (travel, food, accommodation, insurance).

“Administrators have no idea how the volunteers’ costs, like transport, could be covered. When we talk about developing volunteering, then administrators and personnel managers are certain target groups that should be informed and involved, encouraged. The main question is that volunteers act free of charge, from free will, and how can we pay them. They act out of free will, but when they do something 8 hours in a row, they have some costs related to travel and food.”

Involving volunteers is often done on a project basis. When local public services are contracted, using volunteer help often is interpreted as work with no cost; only a few local governments have realised that coordinating volunteers can be a full-time job that needs to be funded in order to sustain the involvement of volunteers in offering public services. Funding can be found for certain activities, like nature protection, but it does not make a difference whether volunteers are involved or not. Involving volunteers or community could give extra points in project assessment process.

Organisations need legal advice on how to sign contracts with volunteers, in order to be clear about the expectations from both sides and how costs related to volunteering can be covered. Volunteering has not been separately defined in the Estonian legal system, but volunteers and volunteers involving organisations operate in the legal framework of the third sector and the labour market in general. Thus, organisations need to sign a contract for services or an authorisation agreement, but bookkeepers use them normally for paid work. This brings many questions. So legal advice on how to cover volunteering-related costs and correctly follow Estonian regulations would be useful.

Working with public sector institutions is a normal part of activity for developed organisations. Due to direct contact with target groups and long experience, they are often consulted or invited to working groups, when a new legislation or development is being planned. Some organisations have a regular cooperation with public sector in offering public services.

Organisations invite MPs, ministers and ministry representatives to their events to develop partnership and discuss ideas.

“In general, the cooperation is satisfactory, although changes in public sector are slower to take place than in NGOs or foundations, so one has to put effort into improving the legal situation etc. to further develop volunteering.”

Data overview

1 RESEARCH AND STATISTICS HIGHLIGHTS

VOLUNTEERING ACROSS EUROPE

Volunteering in Estonia 2009

30% of the Estonian population is aware that they are volunteers by the national definition and 17% classify themselves as volunteers, when they see the list of activities of volunteers.

Most popular activities among volunteers:

- Offering help to other people: 50%
- Public space maintenance (parks, forests) or rescue work: 43%
- Offering transport: 26%
- Public communication: 24%
- Organising events: 19%
- Lobby or advocacy (representing interests in public or among decision makers): 17%
- Organising workshops or instructing people: 17%
- Campaigning, fundraising or interviewing: 16%
- Collecting, serving, or delivering food or other goods: 15%
- Administrative or office work: 13%
- Self-help and mutual aid groups: 5%

Volunteers fall into 3 main groups:

- Quite passive volunteers, who act when they have an interesting proposal (78% of volunteers), mainly involved in local and community development, environment protection, social work.
- Active volunteers (17% of volunteers), mainly involved in longer-term activities like leading NPO work, office work, organising training sessions and events.
- Especially devoted volunteers (5% of volunteers), mainly involved in self-help groups activities in community development, social and religious work.

Main motivators for volunteers:

- Feeling of being useful: 66%
- Spend time usefully: 64%

- Help other people: 63%
- Socialise with other people: 62%
- Feel satisfaction and happiness from activities: 61%
- Have a good time with other people: 60%
- Acquire new knowledge, skills and experience: 52%
- Get new contacts: 51%
- Improve the ability to find pleasant work: 44%
- Contribute to the development of society in general: 41%

Organisations whose volunteers are highly motivated are distinguished mainly by giving volunteers a variety of possibilities to contribute so that they can choose, giving adequate feedback and complimenting them. Organisational development level has also effect on the volunteers' motivation: volunteers are motivated in organisations with good reputation, which have effect on the society and are financially stable.

Short overview of suggestions given with the Volunteering in Estonia 2009 study

For general development:

- Linking clearly national strategies in volunteering, citizen education, adult education and labour market policy. Developing volunteering should be a common activity for all of them, because volunteering can be used for educating, skills-building and raising social capital.
- Public awareness-raising on volunteering should be planned differently for specific groups:
 - Youth look for new experiences, knowledge and skills and they use actively internet communities.

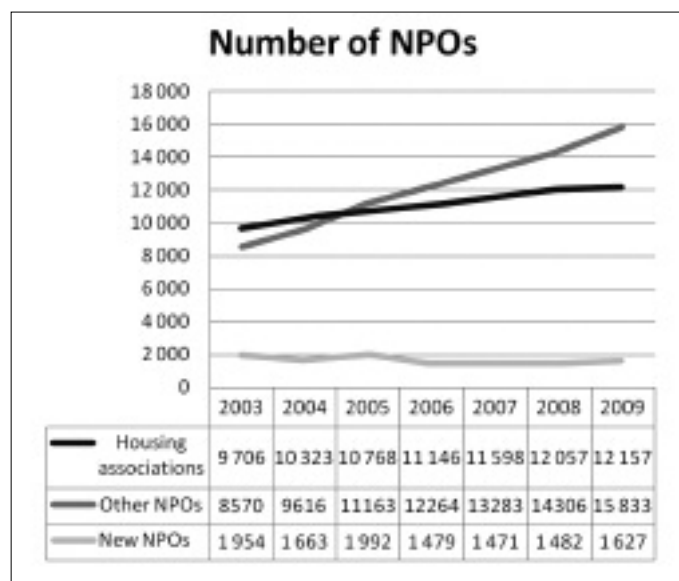
- Middle-aged people want to improve possibilities for finding a favourable job and they would be more motivated if their employer gave a day or two off for volunteering.
- Older people mainly want to help others in need and they can be reached through TV and radio.

For organisations:

- Organisations need to find a balance between volunteers' expectations and organisational and societal needs, in order to motivate volunteers and engage them in favour of the organisation and society.
- Volunteer contribution has a distinguished role and function in organisational activities meant for achieving statutory aims.
- Because volunteers offer highly valuable personal time and energy besides their everyday activities (school, work, family, hobbies, and friends), the costs related to volunteering (work equipment, travel, food...) should be covered by the organisation.
- Offer different opportunities for volunteering, so that each could choose the most interesting.
- Offer training, instruction, active feedback and sincere recognition.
- Offer possibilities to combine volunteering with everyday activities (family, friends, hobbies, school).
- Inform the wider public about the activities of the organisation, in order to increase the impact of volunteer contribution.
- Systematically develop the organisation to ensure that it has a good reputation, is seen in public, has an expert role in shaping local or national decisions, and has friendly and caring coordinators of volunteers.¹¹

2 ECONOMIC AND STATISTICAL INDICATORS

Table 2 Number of NPOs



Source: National Register of Not for Profit Associations and Foundations.

Housing associations consist of apartment and garage associations that are responsible for the common management and maintenance of the real-estate proportions belonging to the members.

Table 3 Economic value of the not for profit sector

Economic value of the not for profit sector	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
NPO share (%) in GDP by expenditure	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3
Volunteer contribution, share (%) of GDP	0.7	0.8	0.9	1	1.2
NPO share (%) in GDP, expenditure and volunteer contribution	2	2	2.1	2.2	2.5
NPO share (million EUR) in GDP by expenditure	128.4	137.7	158.0	181.7	201.4
Volunteers' value of work (million EUR) ¹²	70.7	91.4	117.6	154.3	191.5

Source: Estonian Statistical Office, author's calculations.

¹²The best possible calculation of the value of volunteers, based on average number of volunteer hours per organisation in 2004-2006 and average pay per hour in the labour market for each respective year.

Table 4 Types and range of not for profit organisations, in numbers

Number of NPOs (2009)	Associations	Foundations	Total
Housing associations	12,128	29	12,157
Arts, entertainment and recreation	3,892	105	3,997
Human health and social work activities	603	113	716
Education	520	29	549
Other NPOs ¹⁵	10,038	533	10,571
Total	27,181	809	27,990

Source: National Register of Not for Profit Associations and Foundations.

Table 5 Financial and human resources, in numbers

	Associations	Foundations
Workforce of NPOs 2008	19,500	20,000
Average pay per month in NPOs 2008 (EUR)	320	800

Source: Estonian Statistical Office.

The workforce of NPOs formed 6% of the total national workforce in 2008. The national average pay per month was 825 EUR in 2008.

3 OF VOLUNTEERS AND ORGANISATIONS (INTERVIEWS)

3.1 MOTIVATIONS AND BARRIERS

In the opinion of the people interviewed the motivations for volunteering can be associated with life-long learning (educating and developing the volunteer's skills, getting experiences, discover yourself, doing something entirely new, self-realisation), social capital (new ac-

quaintances and new relationships, socialising with nice people, feeling joy in cooperation), active citizenship in general (contribute to preserving the environment, caring and compassion towards animals and people, being active in old age) or hobbies (doing something close to heart, opportunity to spend time in the nature, cheap way to travel).

"My 10-year experience has shown that Estonian youth are a new generation, free from the Soviet background (...). Actually, they are searching for possibilities to discover themselves and do it in a way that also benefits others, not to do it at the expense of others (...). The main questions for the youth are: who am I? What am I doing here and what is my calling? Volunteering is a wonderful opportunity to discover what they actually want to do. Being in an environ-

¹⁵ Includes different NPOs that cannot be distinguished in the National Register.

mental organisation, being involved in a cultural project or working with orphans are opportunities to experiment how they feel about those issues..."

According to the interviewees, the reason why people do not engage in volunteering is that many do not know exactly what it is or cannot see the value of it. There is also a lack of role models young people in particular could relate to: *"We need more good examples of volunteers, that's why it is very important to bring to the front the public recognition of volunteers and show that people who contribute their time and energy are worthy of recognition and have done something extremely important for our society."*

Also some interviewees think that a competing type of attitude is widespread instead of cooperation and caring and that some people think they need to beat others at everything (capitalism and competing). According to one interviewee, personality plays a role, as well: some people are extroverts, others are introverts and not very easily attracted to volunteering.

"Volunteering is mainly a question of attitude. I see different kinds of elderly people. Some are happy to stay at home and ask the others: why do you go to the centre, don't you have anything to do at home? As they say in psychology, some are introverts, others extroverts, active and living projecting themselves outwards, the others have their hands on piles of books or handicraft at home."

3.2 NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

Volunteer involving organisations need good leaders with a lot of energy and time to advise and support volunteers and give them feedback. This means for the organisations to have special staff dedicated to volunteer coordination and motivation and enough funds to sustain their activity.

"It needs a lot of energy, time and good leaders. A volunteer wants to feel important, wants to socialise with you at each possible moment and wants to be involved in the process, ideally from the birth of the idea. Leaders need to contribute a lot; this is the resource we need to give."

Volunteer involving organisations should be mapped and added into a national database, so that organisations could look for partners, and volunteers could find possibilities for contributing. Some information is available on the web, and some organisations can be met at conferences, but nobody has the full list of volunteer involving organisations.

"We need to map volunteer organisations. I know some bigger organisations, but I am not aware of the maximum, who else involves volunteers, who I might partner and share experiences with. We are planning training for volunteers and I do not know who I could invite to train, for example."

Representation and coordination bodies

In Estonia the following network and foundation exist to give general representation to civil society with no special attention on volunteering.

1 NETWORK OF ESTONIAN NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

NENO- Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations (since 1991) is a membership organisation created for the implementation and protection of the common interest of Estonian public benefit not for profit organisations. NENO currently (summer 2009) gathers 99 large and medium-sized active and operational public benefit not for profit organisations in Estonia from all fields, both associations and foundations. At the same time, its information network involves more than 2,500 organisations.

NENO's mission is to give voice to and advocate on behalf of Estonian public benefit organisations and its work is dedicated to the development and promotion of civic action and civil society in Estonia. NENO's goals are to foster development trends and provide support services to Estonian not for profits; increase public awareness; advocate for the interests of its members and other public benefit NPOs; improve working relationships with the public and business sectors.

2 ENTERPRISE ESTONIA FOUNDATION

Enterprise Estonia Foundation aims to actively contribute to the establishing and development of the not for profit associations by developing the civil society. It provides information regarding not for profit activities and supports the projects carried out by not for profit associations. In cooperation with county development centres, it provides information on how to start a not for profit association and offers training and consultation to the associations.

Training and consultation

County development centres provide advice regarding the establishing of not for profit associations (NFPAs) and foundations, taxes and reporting, supporting possibilities, etc. The mentoring programme of not for profit associations assists the starting NFPAs in developing and strengthening their communication network. The training provides an overview of the basic matters for the smooth running of the association.

Grants

The local initiative grant is offered to rural and urban citizens for the maintenance of home surroundings, the pro-

motion of local life and the strengthening of the community. Associations and foundations can apply for several other grants meant for the development of local public services and for the strengthening of regional competitiveness.

3 NETWORKING (INTERVIEWS)

Cooperation with other Estonian organisations and belonging to umbrella organisations is a normal part of everyday activity and

seen positively by the people interviewed. *"I believe that there is much power in cooperation; organisations should start from their own country and then look for international partners."* Organisations also meet at conferences, seminars and workshops. Often, good ideas and solutions are sought outside Estonia. Many cooperate with organisations in neighbouring countries (Latvia, Finland, Russia, Sweden) but some have important partners also in England, the Netherlands, Denmark, Iceland, Germany, Ireland and other countries.

Support bodies

1 SUPPORT MEASURES (QUESTIONNAIRES)

Many support measures are part of a national plan for developing citizen activity, but are mainly implemented by Volunteer Development Estonia, which is short in human and financial resources. The local office of the European Volunteering Service promotes volunteering among young people. The *Kodukant* Estonian Village Movement promotes volunteering in rural development. The annual event Let's Do It! has also an important role in developing volunteering. There is room for developing cooperation between the mentioned organisations in improving the measures for enhancing

volunteering and sharing responsibilities. *"The voluntary sector could work more in cooperation towards the general recognition and development of volunteering."*

2 VOLUNTEER SUPPORT CENTRES

There is no system of volunteer support centres in Estonia. The only official support centre is Volunteer Development Estonia. The local office of the European Volunteering Service and the *Kodukant* Estonian Village Movement offer their own separate contribution in supporting volunteering.

Focus on support bodies

(Questionnaires)

Volunteer Development Estonia

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Voluntary activity has an important role in the development of the Estonian society. Being a volunteer means developing yourself and being an active and useful member of society. Volunteer Development Estonia (VDE) works for a future Estonia, where voluntary activity will be a daily and normal part of people's lives, organisations will know how to effectively involve and manage volunteers and the society will recognise, appreciate and support volunteer activities. Volunteer Development Estonia facilitates the growth and development of volunteer activities in Estonia.

Aims

Volunteer Development Estonia bases its work on the Non-Governmental Organisations' Ethics Code.¹⁴ It aims to promote volunteer activities; to improve the organisations' ability to involve and manage volunteers; to create an environment to support and facilitate volunteer activities.

Activities

- Volunteer work portal.

The main tool for bringing together organisations that need the help of volunteers and volunteers who would like to offer their assistance. Volunteers and organisations can register on the web page www.vabatahtlikud.ee/kuulutused, check out what kind of help is needed or offered, add their own adverts and messages about new offers to their email account. Organisations can also help by displaying adverts on their homepage.

- National volunteer recognition event.

The 5th of December is the International Volunteers' Day, celebrated all over the world. On that day, volunteers are recognised and celebrated for their contributions and dedication. In Estonia, the national volunteer recognition event has been taking place since 2005, with Volunteer Development Estonia being one of the main organizers. The event provides a chance to thank people who have helped others or done something good for society. Candidates for recognition can be proposed by citizens, NPOs, public institutions or private companies. The patron of the event is The President of the Republic of Estonia.

- Training and counselling.

In order to improve the organisations' ability to involve and manage volunteers, Volunteer Development Estonia offers training and coun-

selling on issues of volunteer work, as well as on the involvement and management of volunteers. It also advises volunteers on how to find suitable volunteer activities.

- Voluntary activity development plan.

In 2006, with the support of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Volunteer Development Estonia drafted the first Estonian National Development Plan for Volunteering for the years 2007-2010. The aim of the Development Plan is to define common understandings, visions and tasks for facilitating and developing voluntary activity in Estonia.

The year 2007 could be called a year of continuity and consistency for the organisation which celebrated its seven years of activities (five of whom as an independent organisation) by taking the name of Volunteer Development Estonia. This new name more clearly expresses the aims and the actual work of the organisation since for several years it was devoted to the promotion and development of volunteer activities in Estonia. A major achievement to be pointed out is the Estonian National Development Plan for Volunteering: as a contract partner for the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Volunteer Development Estonia put into practice its activities for 2007. Continually and consistently, it did its part to make the Ministry of Internal Affairs responsible for volunteer work in Estonia and to gain enough money for the activities outlined in the Development Plan for 2008. Basic training in involvement and management of volunteers proved successful. In 2007, several paid training courses were ordered, in addition to training organised by VDE in the framework of projects. It developed an advanced-level course aimed at organisations experienced in volunteer involvement and arranged initial training courses according to the new programme. As a consistent activity, VDE continued developing the Volunteer Work Gateway website and the effort of creating a new volunteer activity homepage in Estonia was accomplished.

The highlight of the year was the awarding event for Estonian volunteers in December. Volunteer Development Estonia took over organising it from the Open Estonia Foundation Baltic-American Partnership Program in 2007. The festive event was held in Mustpeade Maja, Tallinn, celebrating 50 volunteers. The acknowledged persons and Volunteer Development Estonia gained a lot of media attention.

The organisation also showed consistency in promoting volunteer work and civil society in the city of Tartu. Having represented for years the Cooperation Court of the Tartu Region Citizens' Associations at talks with the Tartu City Council on more effective cooperation between the citizens' associations and the City Council, VDE finally arrived at the decision to start drawing up a Tartu Civil Society Development Plan, led by the Tartu City Council. Thus Volunteer Development Estonia was able to withdraw from the role of active leader, although a representative of the organisation keeps participating in the process as a member of the Civil Society Development Plan workgroup.

The organisation continued working towards the strategic goals set in 2006. However, it became clear that the organisation needed to clarify its focus in order to be more effective, result-oriented and sustainable in the future. The VDE team was thus complemented by active members, several supporting members and a new co-worker. A remarkably important event was VDE becoming a member of the European Volunteer Centre to better represent the Estonian volunteers and organisations involving volunteers on European level.

Member of

- European Volunteer Centre (CEV)
- NENO-Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations, *Eesti Mittetulundusühingute ja Sihtasutuste Liit*
- Cooperation Court of the Tartu Region Citizens' Associations *Tartumaa Vabaihenduste Koostöökoda*

QUESTIONNAIRES

Volunteer Development Estonia

▪ Territory covered	Estonia	
▪ Volunteers	7	
▪ Staff	7 part time for volunteering support and development	
▪ Volunteering support activities	PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES	Promotional campaigns on mass media Public events Meetings and conferences
	CONSULTING AND ASSISTANCE	Management Legal and notarial Fiscal and administrative European Voluntary Service Training processes
	TRAINING	Courses, with or without stage
	COMMUNICATION	Own web site Press release Creation of special communication events Presence in local and national newspapers Presence on other media

Archimedes Foundation

Estonian National Agency for the Youth in Action Programme

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Implementation of the Youth in Action Programme is mainly decentralised, the aim being to work as closely as possible with the beneficiaries and to adapt to the diversity of the national systems and situations in the youth field. Each Programme Country has appointed a National Agency. These National Agencies promote and implement the Programme at national level and act as the link between the European Commission, the promoters at national, regional and local level and the young people themselves. In addition, the National Agencies play an important role as an intermediate structure for the development of youth work by:

- Creating opportunities to share experiences.
- Providing training and non-formal learning experiences.
- Promoting values like social inclusion, cultural diversity and active citizenship.
- Supporting all kinds of youth structures and groups, especially less formal ones.
- Fostering recognition of non-formal learning through appropriate measures.

Finally, the National Agencies act as a supporting structure for the framework of European cooperation in the youth field.

Activities

- Collect and provide appropriate information on the Youth in Action Programme.
- Administer a transparent and equitable selection process for project applications to be funded at decentralised level.
- Provide effective and efficient administrative procedures.
- Seek cooperation with external bodies in order to help implement the Programme.
- Evaluate and monitor the implementation of the Programme.
- Provide support to project applicants and promoters throughout the project life cycle.
- Form a functioning network with all National Agencies and the Commission.
- Improve the visibility of the Programme.
- Promote the dissemination and exploit the results of the Programme at national level.

Member of the Youth in Action National Agencies in Europe Network.

QUESTIONNAIRES

Archimedes Foundation

<p>▪ Territory covered</p>	<p>Regional: Valgamaa, Võrumaa, Põlvamaa, Lääne-Virumaa ja Ida-Virumaa Estonia Europe International</p>	
<p>▪ Staff</p>	<p>2 full time and 1 part time for volunteer support and development 8 full time and 1 part time for other activities</p>	
<p>▪ Activities</p>	<p>SOCIAL ASSISTANCE CULTURE AND CULTURAL GOODS</p>	<p>Support for learning re-education/reintegration Research, studies, documentation Training, Cultural promotion</p>
<p>▪ Volunteering support activities</p>	<p>CONSULTING AND ASSISTANCE TRAINING PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES COMMUNICATION INFORMATION & DOCUMENTATION</p>	<p>European Voluntary Service Project writing and presentations to bids International volunteering and networking Training processes Access to European funds Courses, with or without stage Long distance training Meetings and conferences Public events Publications Own web site Press release Presence in local and national newspapers Presence on other media Information office Books, manuals, booklets Magazines and periodicals</p>

“Kodukant” Estonian Village Movement

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Kodukant is an association of non-governmental organisations, structured in 3 levels:

- 1 National Association made up of the County Associations and 6 other NPOs.
- 15 independent County Associations, one in each Estonian county.
- Village Associations.

Formed officially on 9 October 1997, it has about 5,000 members. *Kodukant* embodies the spirit and values of the villages and is driven by a passion to retain rural life and traditions. It is a voice and a market place for rural people and a uniting force for the many dispersed rural communities.

Aims

- Give technical advice: consultation in the areas of rural development, rural youth, small enterprise project design and maintenance, woman and gender development.
- Networking and communication: information about services, linking member organisations to services, partnerships and funding opportunities.
- Capacity building: training and courses for organisations and individuals in the areas of grant writing, strategic planning, leadership, small enterprise development and community building; study trips to other counties and countries offering the opportunity to observe successful projects.
- Advocacy: serve as a mediator between local villages and national government by educating, advocating and influencing decisions taken at the local, regional and national levels.
- Support of local initiatives: promotion and support of village days, information days, village development plans and village leaders.
- Co-operation: finding partners and establishing partnerships between villages, counties, countries and sectors.

Activities

- Offering support to local development.

The movement undertakes a wide range of activities in support of rural communities. These focus on building the capacity of the villages to become organised, to plan their priorities, to raise and manage funds, to undertake projects, and to link with other villages and organisations.

- Influencing policy.
An increasingly important role for *Kodukant* is advocacy to shape local, regional, national and EU policy. We try to open up the views and needs of small rural communities to the distant policy-makers.
- Connecting internationally.
Trans-national links have always been important for *Kodukant*. It belongs to NPO Forum Synergies, the Nordic network *Hela Norden Ska Leva*, ERA, ERCA, PREPARE network. It works in close co-operation with other village movements and helped many countries in Europe to establish their organisations. *Kodukant* also has several international co-projects running.
- Networking.
Independent associations are formed at each level, but are connected movement's umbrella. This enables *Kodukant* to operate more effectively across the country, as well as to connect to the decision-making process at each formal administrative level.

Achievements

- The local Initiatives Programme: a national fund for rural initiatives, launched in 1996 by *Kodukant*. During the first year 1,1 million EEK (68,000 Euro) was given to the rural projects all over Estonia; the fund has now grown to 22 millions EEK (1,5 million Euros).
- The Rural Parliament of Estonian Villages: a forum which brings together village members, representatives of local and international organisations, authorities and decision makers, government representatives, county administrations, communities and institutions to discuss and seek solutions to issues affecting rural development.
- Four handbooks for village leaders: aiming to teach village leaders how to start development processes, write development plans for their own villages and apply for money.
- Environmental project (1997-2002): *Kodukant* organised in the Viljandi county a twin community project in the field of environment between one Swedish and one Estonian community. The

aim was, among other things, to spread information on how to save energy at home, take care of wastes and be aware of the sustainable development in general. The target group was schoolchildren and common people (at the grassroots level). One important result was the clean-up of road sides, now extended to the whole of Estonia.

- Travelling Workshop: in 1999, the *Kodukant* Movement received representatives from EU and candidate states, NPOs, local authorities and ministries who had seminars in 10 Estonian villages talking about partnership between local initiatives and governments. The seminar had an effect on the Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (SAPARD) activities and started the rural life co-operation programme PREPARE-Partnership for Rural Europe.
- Working with the Government: as a result of contacts taken at governmental level, *Kodukant* has naturally become a mediator between villages and the government through education, advocacy and lobbying. Since its foundation, *Kodukant* has always been ready for a partner's role to the public sector in the development of the rural Estonia.
- Lobbying: in order to improve and continue the relationship with the government, *Kodukant* repeatedly invites MPs, ministers or ministry representatives to its events. *Kodukant* also has a supportive Local Initiative Group in Estonian Parliament, consisting of members of all parties represented in Parliament. Furthermore, representatives of *Kodukant* are members of committees of different kind at national, regional, and local level.
- The Learning Village: this *Kodukant* project was selected to represent Estonia at the European Enterprise Awards in the spring 2009.

Member of

- NENO-Network of Nonprofit Organizations, *Eesti Mittetulundusühenduste ja Sihtasutuste Liit*
- Nordic Rural Movements Network, *Hela Norden Ska Leva*
- PREPARE network

QUESTIONNAIRES

“Kodukant” Estonian Village Movement

<p>▪ Territory covered</p>	<p>Estonia Micro-local level, village organisations: <i>Atsalama</i> Rural People Association (<i>Atsalama Maarahvaselts</i>), <i>Lihula</i> Folk High School (<i>Lihula Rahvaülikool</i>), <i>Kuhjaverre</i> Village Association (<i>Kuhjaverre Küla Selts</i>) Regional, 15 member organisations in all counties: <i>Ühendus Kodukant Harjumaa</i>, <i>Hiiumaa Kodukant</i>, <i>Ida-Virumaa Külade Esindus</i>, <i>Jõgevamaa Kodukandi Ühendus</i>, <i>Kodukant Järvamaa</i>, <i>Virumaa Lootus (Lääne-Virumaa külade ühendus)</i>, <i>Põlvamaa Liikumine Kodukant</i>, <i>Pärnumaa Kodukant</i>, <i>Rapla Maakonna Külade Liit</i>, <i>Saaremaa Kodukant</i>, <i>Kodukant Tartumaa</i>, <i>Valgamaa Kodukant</i>, <i>Ühendus Kodukant Viljandimaa</i>, <i>Kodukant Võrumaa</i>, <i>Läänemaa Kodukant</i></p>				
<p>▪ Volunteers</p>	<p>15</p>				
<p>▪ Staff</p>	<p>2 full time and 1 part time for volunteer support and development 1 full time and 1 part time for other activities</p>				
<p>▪ Activities</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="637 1046 1092 1173"> <p>SOCIAL ASSISTANCE ENVIRONMENT - NATURE - ANIMALS</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1092 1046 1596 1173"> <p>Research, studies, documentation Surveillance of the environmental heritage History and architectural heritage protection</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="637 1173 1092 1337"> <p>CULTURE AND CULTURAL GOODS CITIZENS RIGHTS AND TUTELAGE</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1092 1173 1596 1337"> <p>Training Tutelage of citizens and participation Legal advice</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>SOCIAL ASSISTANCE ENVIRONMENT - NATURE - ANIMALS</p>	<p>Research, studies, documentation Surveillance of the environmental heritage History and architectural heritage protection</p>	<p>CULTURE AND CULTURAL GOODS CITIZENS RIGHTS AND TUTELAGE</p>	<p>Training Tutelage of citizens and participation Legal advice</p>
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QUESTIONNAIRES

“Kodukant” Estonian Village Movement

PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES	Fundraising activities Publications Sports events Research divulgation
CONSULTING AND ASSISTANCE	Events organisation Project writing and presentations to bids Training processes Communication International volunteering and networking
TRAINING	Courses, with or without stage Long distance training Individual classes or seminars
INFORMATION & DOCUMENTATION	Magazines and periodicals Videos Information office Books, manuals, booklets
COMMUNICATION	Periodical publications or newsletters Videos and CDs Own web site Presence in local and national newspapers Creation of special communication events Press release Press conferences Presence on other media

Development policies

VOLUNTEERING ACROSS EUROPE

1 PUBLIC INCENTIVES

An incentive for volunteering provided by the government is the awarding of citizens who performed outstanding deeds with the Cross of Merit by the President of Estonia on the Anniversary of the Estonian Republic (24 February). Every year, the list of awarded citizens receives media and public attention. Some people in the list have earned the honour through dedication at work, but many through their volunteer contribution.

2 CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVES

The President of Estonia congratulates the winners of the Volunteer of the Year Award in different categories, an event broadcast live on the national television. Gathering and spreading volunteer stories and awareness raising campaigns form also an important part of promoting volunteering. Both are organised by Volunteer Development Estonia. The Let's Do It! civic initiative contributed significantly to promoting volunteer activity, gathering 50,000 people in 2008 to clean forests from garbage and 11,000 people in 2009 to brainstorm on neighbourhood and community development solutions. The local office of the European Volunteering Service organises public events to share volunteering experience in other countries and the values of active citizenship among young people.

3 ON INFRASTRUCTURE FOR VOLUNTEERING (INTERVIEWS AND QUESTIONNAIRES)

Organisations involving volunteers say that some guidelines are relatively easy to find, but advice is needed on how to develop volunteer coordination capacity. Quite often organisations cannot implement the potential of volunteers, because they are overwhelmed by everyday responsibilities (project writing, implementing, reporting, service provision...) and are not able to find time for people interested in contributing. Also a network of volunteer organisations is needed to better accommodate the supply of volunteers. The Volunteer's Passport that describes volunteers' knowledge and skills-building experience is a useful initiative, but personnel managers should use it in job-interviews and employment policy should support it. The annual public recognition of volunteers is also an important activity.

"Volunteering is talked about, but it shouldn't be only a theme for media. State should support it more, volunteers could be recognised more. The annual public recognition organised by Volunteer Development Estonia works

very well, but it needs more supporters, as it has such a wide impact on society."

The Ministries of Education, Culture, and the local governments need to see better the positive social and economic impacts of volunteering and be more active in supporting it. Working adults need special awareness-raising activities, because they have certain life routines and do not associate volunteering with their life the way young people do.

4 STRATEGIC GOALS

4.1 VOLUNTEERING DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2007-2010

The Volunteering Development Plan is the first national policy created in support of volunteering in Estonia adopted by the Ministry of the Interior. The process of drawing up the Plan helped to foster the dialogue between different stakeholders: volunteers, organisations, ministries. The definition of volunteering was discussed and agreed upon. Concerning supporting and promoting volunteering, common standpoints and principles were developed and goals set. The national action plan (implementation plan) was adopted and partly covered by necessary and available funding.

The main objective of the Volunteering Development Plan 2007-2010 is to support and promote volunteering in Estonia. The goals and activities are organised according to the general framework of the International Year of Volunteers 2001: recognition, promotion, facilitation/support, and networking.

The goals of the national Development Plan are:

- Making the general public aware of volunteering and of its value.
- Introducing volunteering successfully at both individual and societal level.
- Creating supporting structures and legal environment for volunteering development.
- Starting up networks.

So far, the government has allocated fewer funds than needed for following the whole plan and achieving all goals. The funding has

been as follows: 2007, 16,936 EUR; 2008, 82,126 EUR; 2009, 55,603 EUR (estimated).

On the other hand, the situation has significantly improved, compared with the time before the Plan, when no funds were systematically allocated from the state budget for supporting and promoting volunteering.

4.2 DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR CIVIC INITIATIVE SUPPORT 2007-2010

The Volunteering Development Plan 2007-2010 was integrated into the Development Plan for Civic Initiative Support 2007-2010. The objective of the Development Plan for Civic Initiative Support is to create favourable conditions for civic engagement in Estonia.

The goals of the National Development Plan are:

- Citizen education: fostering diverse citizen education involving different social groups, supporting the values of civil society, and an active and caring attitude.
- Networks of civil society and active citizenship: active citizenship is versatile and civil society organisations are sustainable.
- Volunteering and philanthropy: volunteering, donating and philanthropy on a large-scale and diverse.
- Involvement: the decision-making process in the public sector is effective due to stakeholder and interest group involvement.

5 EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE (INTERVIEWS)

According to the people interviewed, the European Volunteer Service (EVS) is important in enhancing multi-cultural learning, also EVS is sufficiently funded and organised, the volunteers even receive health and property insurance. It is moreover deemed useful to visit countries where volunteering is a natural part of life, like the Netherlands, for example.

"At European level, I think many good things have been done.

There are funds for volunteering in Europe, there is the European Volunteer Service and lots of information available. I was a volunteer in the Netherlands; there, being a volunteer is a natural part of life. It should be the same in Estonia, volunteers should not be extraordinary people who are able to find time for many things, but it should be normal that we all do it."

At European level, there could be funds for organisations coordinating volunteers in order to develop international networks in specific fields and developing volunteering in general. Field-based pan-European networks would boost organisational development, provide opportunities for exchanging volunteers and know-how, and enhance partnership in applying for funds.

LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Tarmo Tüür

Conservation Holidays Project Manager of the Estonian Fund for Nature, member of the executive board, working with more than 1,000 volunteers at nature conservation activities.

Eva Truuverk

Coordinator of the Let's Do It! My Estonia brainstorming session, involving more than 1,000 volunteers who held 400 workshops attended by 11,000 people on how to improve neighbourhoods and Estonia as whole; organising the next big event of volunteer workshops in 2010.

Kairi Birk

Person responsible for leading the Big Ideas programme and commu-

nication initiated by the Youth Programme that involves about 140 volunteers helping 13-19 year old schoolchildren create new social initiatives, implement big ideas.

Piret Ehavald

Coordinator of the Tallinn 2011 European Capital of Culture, involving 500 volunteers in different cultural events before and during 2011.

Lea Viies

Self-help and Advisory Centre for Senior Citizens, coordinator of 50 volunteer home visitors for elderly people, living on their own or in homes for the elderly.

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Principles for stakeholder and interest groups involvement in decision-making processes.

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Rome, Spes, 2010. pp. 229 -270.

For publications, initiatives and collaborations please contact:

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