

COHESIVE ESTONIA: INTEGRATION, INCL. ADAPTATION 2022-2025

Performance area	Cohesive society
Performance area goals	Estonian society is a cohesive and inclusive
Sectoral development plan	Cohesive Estonia 2021-2030 development plan
Name of the programme	Integration programme, including adaptation
Goal of the programme	Estonian society is integrated and socially cohesive, people with various linguistic and cultural backgrounds actively participate in the life of society and share democratic values and a common cultural, information and communication space, and feel united. Equal opportunities for successful independent living and well-being have been created for everyone living in Estonia.
Programme period	2022–2025
Organisation with primary responsibility (ministry)	Ministry of Culture
Organisations with co-responsibility (authorities in this area of government)	
Ministry with co-responsibility and organisations in this area of government (in case of a joint programme)	

Introduction

The programme supports the formation of a cohesive society, contributes to the creation of a sense of cohesion between various population groups in Estonian society and to the growth of Estonian residents' awareness of various cultures and languages. At the national level, integration policy started to be dealt with in the late 1990s: the first development plan in this area was drafted between 1997 and 2000, and institutions dealing with integration policy were established, incl. the Integration Foundation (hereinafter INSA). Since the first development plan in the field of integration was adopted in 2000, eight integration surveys, as well as several studies in the field of integration, have been conducted¹, as have final and mid-term evaluations of the development plans and programmes. The studies and analyses confirm that social cohesion has increased and that positive developments have taken place in key areas of integration, but that a number of challenges and bottlenecks remain.

Increasing the cohesion of society, as well as the adaptation and integration of people with linguistic and cultural backgrounds different from the country's main population, is becoming increasingly important for the country's stability, economic growth potential and social well-being. Cultural diversity and respect for differences support the country's development potential, but is also a challenge for society. Achieving coherence requires reducing inequalities and exclusion and strengthening social relations, ties and communication. The integration process is necessary so that people do not leave Estonia, that people with migrant backgrounds acknowledge the behavioural norms and values of society, so that everyone in Estonia can realise their full potential regardless of age, gender, ethnic or national origin, religion, disability or sexual orientation.

Estonia's adaptation and integration policy is based on the obligations and goals of Estonia's membership in international organizations and takes into account the framework of legal and operational principles defined and coordinated at the level of the European Union.

¹ Integration monitoring was conducted in 2000, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2015, 2017 and 2020/2021

Adaptation, i.e. the first five years after new immigrants arrive, acquire the basic knowledge and skills to operate in the country, is considered to be the first step for further integration. Integration means increasing the cultural, political and socio-economic cohesion of a society. Integration activities support the active participation of people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in the development of a socially cohesive society. A successful integration process is primarily driven by voluntary selection and motivation, supported by a national and community institutional framework that includes not only public sector organisations, including local authorities, as well as private sector and civil society organisations.

The main target group of the integration policy to date has been the Russian-speaking permanent residents of Estonia who do not have Estonian citizenship and are predominantly citizens of the Russian Federation, or persons with undetermined citizenship. The integration activities, including those focused on adaptation, during the new programming period will be directed at people with Estonian as their mother tongue and greater emphasis will be placed on immigrants (including beneficiaries of international protection), returnees and compatriots.

Integration policy, including adaptation, is horizontal in nature and involves a number of policy areas in the national budgetary strategy, helping to achieve their goals, including preserving the Estonian language and culture, ensuring the security of the Estonian state and increasing the competitiveness of the economy. At the same time, the activities of other policy areas must support the implementation of the integration policy goals.

This integration programme, which also includes adaptation, describes the activities of the Ministry of Culture that should be included in the activities related to integration of public sector as a whole in order to achieve the integration objectives

[Programme management](#)

The programme is based on the Cohesive Estonia development plan for 2021-2030. The planning and monitoring of the programme's activities takes place in the steering group for integration, as well as adaptation, and in other cooperation networks active in the field of cultural diversity.

The Ministry of Culture, under the leadership of the Undersecretary for Cultural Diversity, is responsible for the preparation and implementation of the programme. The activities and priorities to be implemented are based on the action programme of the Government of the Republic, are coordinated with the state budget strategy every four years, and are concretised yearly as part of national budgetary process. The Ministry of Culture updates the program annually, thereby ensuring that the period of the state budget strategy and state budgetary funds are coordinated.

The Ministry also prepares an annual performance report on the implementation of the integration programme, including the adaptation programme, which focuses on the activities financed by the Ministry of Culture and is submitted to the Ministry of Finance in the process of preparing the state budgetary strategy. The programme approved by the Minister is published on the Ministry of Culture website after the State Budget Act is adopted by the Riigikogu and the additional breakdown of state budget resources are completed by the Government of the Republic.

The integration programme, which also includes adaptation measures, includes the activities and services that are planned, implemented and financed by the Ministry of Culture and provides an overview of the most important new initiatives. The activities supporting the integration of society that are carried out by other ministries are reflected in the programmes and activities managed by the ministries. The results are also analysed by monitoring benchmarks.

Programme objective, indicators and budget

Programme objective: Estonian society is integrated and socially cohesive, people with various linguistic and cultural backgrounds actively participate in society and share democratic values, as well as a common cultural, information and communication space, and feel cohesive. Equal opportunities for successful independent living and well-being have been created for everyone living in Estonia.

Performance area and programme measures

Measure, incl. source	Initial level (most recent year)	Target level 1 (2022)	Target level 2 (2023)	Target level 3 (2024)	Target level 4 (2025)

Share index of people with a strong or average national identity among people of other nationalities, % <i>Source: Estonian Integration Monitoring (EIM)</i>	39% 46% (2020)	Not measured	40% 55%	Not measured	Not measured
Proportion of people with an open attitude based on the composite tolerance index, % <i>Source: EIM</i>	Estonians: 47%; Other nationalities: 66% (2020)	Not measured	Estonians: 48%; Other nationalities: 70%	Not measured	Not measured
Self-assessed awareness about what is happening in Estonia among Estonians and residents of other nationalities, % <i>Source: EIM</i>	93% of Estonians and 87% of people of other nationalities consider it to be good or very good (2020)	Not measured	95% of Estonians and 88% of people of other nationalities consider it to be good or very good	Not measured	Not measured

Proportion of people of other nationalities with active Estonian language skills, % Percentage of people of other nationalities who do not speak Estonian, % Source: EIM	41% (fluent or understands, speaks and writes); 8% do not speak Estonian (2020)	Not measured	50% (fluent or understands, speaks and writes); 8% do not speak Estonian	Not measured	Not measured
Frequency of contacts between Estonians and representatives of other nationalities (percentage who have many contacts), % Source: EIM	Estonians: 38%; Other nationalities: 64% (2017) ²	Not measured	Estonians: 50%; Other nationalities: 75%	Not measured	Not measured

Programme budget

ALLOCATION OF COSTS AND INVESTMENTS AMONG THE INDICATORS AND PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES (€)	2022 budget	2023 budget	2024 budget	2025 budget
Integration, including the adaptation programme	-7 074 422	-5 558 231	-5 254 726	-5 256 985

² In 2020, the data was recalculated in the EIM and the wording of the indicator was changed - "Proportion of residents who communicate closely with Estonians and residents of other nationalities (proportion who communicate every day or at least 4 times a week in the sphere of communication)" 2020 result: Estonians: 30%; other nationalities: 39%.

Designing, supporting and developing integration policies	-7 074 422	-5 558 231	-5 254 726	-5 256 985
Development of integration, including adaptation, policies	-1 691 948	-1 592 369	-1 525 189	-1 526 332
Implementation of integration, including adaptation, policies	-5 382 474	-3 965 862	-3 729 537	-3 730 653

Short analysis of the situation

Today's Estonia is a country with people of various ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds and origins, and as the result of immigration, the society's heterogeneity as well as linguistic and cultural diversity may increase even more.

According to the data of the Population Register, as of 01.01.2021, there were **1,339,361** inhabitants of Estonia, of whom **1,133,954** were citizens of the Republic of Estonia. The number of persons with undetermined citizenship residing in Estonia was 68,992 (5.2% of the population). The citizens of other countries residing in Estonia numbered 136,415 (the largest share were citizens of the Russian Federation (84,952), followed by those with Ukrainian citizenship (11,416)).

According to Statistics Estonia (2020), 194 nationalities live in Estonia. Of the country's population, 68% are Estonians, 25% Russians, 2% Ukrainians, 0.8% Belarusians and 0.6% Finns. There is also a small Roma community in Estonia (according to the Population Register, as of 01.06.2021, 673 people have named Roma/Gypsy as their nationality, and about a third of them (237 people), are in the Valga municipality). In the field of integration, regional divisions and the segregation of language environments pose significant challenges. Russian-speaking residents are concentrated in Ida-Viru County and Harju County (especially in Tallinn, Maardu, Paldiski, and Loksa), and they still live in the same settlements where they arrived as immigrants during the post-World War II Soviet era. This situation hinders the cohesion and mutual contacts of the various communities in society. It is therefore necessary to address the cultural, linguistic and regional differences when integrating both new immigrants and people who are not very integrated.

During the last decade, significant changes have also taken place in Estonian migration processes as a result of various social, economic and political processes. International migration is nothing new for Estonia but, in recent years, instead of emigration, we are seeing increasing immigration. Since 2015, Estonia's migration balance has become positive, and more and more immigrants want to stay in Estonia permanently. Emigration has decreased and the return of Estonian citizens and immigration has increased.

In 2020, 10,023 people received temporary residence permits or rights, of which 6,110 were third-country nationals and 3,913 were EU, EEA or Swiss nationals.³ The greatest number of the European Union citizens coming to live in Estonia come from Finland and Latvia. Among the arrivals from third countries, the largest number come from Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

In 2020, the main reasons for immigration from third countries were employment (3024), family migration (2153) and study (662). As in 2019, the immigration limit was reached in the first month of 2020.

In recent years, the cohesion of society has increased in some key areas, e.g. the attitude of the Estonian population towards immigration has become more positive. During better times in the economy and the labour market, the labour market gaps between Estonians and people of other nationalities decrease, but during recessions and crises, the disparities increase. The self-assessed Estonian language skills of residents of other nationalities and performance on Estonian language proficiency exams has improved.

³ Data of the Police and Border Guard Board and the Population Register as of 08.01.2020. Decisions on temporary residence permits and rights made on the basis of the Aliens Act and the number of temporary residence rights registered in 2019. The data do not include the number of temporary residence permits issued for permanent residence in Estonia.

The percentage of children studying Estonian in immersion classes in pre-school institutions has increased, there has also been an increase in the proportion of Russian-speaking young people who passed the B2 level exam with a very good result (over 75 points). In 2020, the audience for the ETV+ TV channel among the Russian-speaking population has increased by 31% compared to 2019 and it has become the most watched Russian-language TV channel in Estonia on a weekly basis. In 2020, 764 people acquired citizenship through naturalisation, and in 2019, 751 people did so. The number of persons with undetermined citizenship decreased primarily due to demographic processes. At the beginning of 2021, 73,206 persons with undetermined citizenship⁴ had a valid residence permit or right; at the end of 2019, there were 75,607⁵.

In the field of integration, greater attention has been paid to the proficiency in and acquisition of the Estonian language over the years. Knowledge of the state language impacts both socio-economic and cultural integration. The diversity of Estonian language learning opportunities and the increased motivation of adults to study had an impact on the results of Estonian language proficiency exams. In 2020, 57.6% of those taking a A2, B1, B2 or C1 level exam successfully completed the Estonian language proficiency exam organised by Innove Foundation.

The motivation to learn Estonian is strongly related to the labour market. More than 90% of those participating in INSA and Unemployment Insurance Fund language courses, mentioned the ability to better cope and improve their prospects in the labour market as their reason for learning Estonian. The learning of the Estonian language was also motivated by the desire to cope better in everyday situations and to participate in social and cultural life.⁶ According to the applied research, there are 52,000–68,000 people who plan to learn Estonian in the next three years.

Assessments of the importance and reliability of various information sources are still a factor that strongly differentiates the ethnic groups living in Estonia.

According to the data in the Monitoring the Integration of Estonian Society (hereinafter EIM) report for 2020, Estonians still consider Estonian Television (ETV) (82%) and other Estonian-language TV and radio channels to be the most important source of information, although

⁴Police and Border Guard Board data as of 01.01.2020.

⁵About 16,000 persons with undetermined citizenship have been criminally punished and therefore cannot apply for Estonian citizenship.

⁶Tallinn University and Estonian Applied Research Centre CentAR (2018). "Estonian language learning in integration and employment policy for adults with a mother tongue other than Estonian: quality, impact and organization".

their importance has slightly decreased since 2017. Of the Russian-language sources, Estonians rated the TV channel ETV + as the most important (19%), the importance of which, together with all other Russian-language sources, has slightly increased compared to 2017.

The ranking of media channels by Russian-language residents is dominated by Estonia's Russian-language news portals (72%) and the Russian-language programme *Aktuaalne kaamera* (64%), which is followed by the Russian TV channels (61%). The ETV+ TV channel (55%) was assessed as a source of information primarily compared to the local, regional and national Russian-language publications and social media (total 54%).

Among Estonian-language information sources, Estonian-language news portals get the highest rating from residents of other nationalities, with a third of the respondents considering them to be important. During the last six years, among people of other nationalities, the local online Russian-language news portals have seen their importance as information sources increase the most, thereby pushing the Russia's TV channels from first place.

In 2020, the number of viewers of Estonian Public Broadcasting (ERR) TV channels continued to grow, especially among the residents of other nationalities. If in 2016 18.6% of people of other nationalities (aged 4 and over) watched ERR TV channels for at least 15 minutes a week, then in 2020 31.9% of the same group watched ERR TV channels.⁷

Compared to the indicators of 2016, the number of visitors to rus.err.ee in 2020 has increased more than sixfold. In 2016, the news.err.ee portal had an average of 9,000 unique users per week; in 2020, this figure reached 49,000 people. The number of visitors to the English portal increased fivefold.⁸

Radio 4 continues to be the Russian-language talk radio with the largest audience, including the radio station with the largest number of listeners in Estonia in terms of everyday radio listeners. On average, 5.6% of Estonians were dedicated listeners of Radio 4, which was the highest result among the Russian-language radio stations.⁹

About 300 national minority cultural societies are active in Estonia, of which about 250 receive governmental support. Governmental support for minority cultures has proved to be an effective policy tool for preserving the intangible cultural heritage of ethnic groups living in the country and creating a multicultural and open cultural space. According to EIM 2017

⁷ Source: Kantar Emor, TV audience measurement survey, 2021.

⁸ Source: ERR, 2021. Gemius Eesti. [gemiusPrism Monitoring](https://www.gemius.com/estonia), 2021.

⁹ Kantar Emor. Radio and music listening survey, 2021.

data, 58% of people of other nationalities do not feel any pressure to give up their national culture and become Estonian, and 85% think that there is room in Estonia for various languages and cultures.

The results of EIM 2020 show that contacts between Estonians and people of other nationalities have increased during the last decade, especially in the workplace and study environments, but not in their leisure time. In order to facilitate contacts between people of different nationalities, media and co-operation activities are carried out in support of greater social cohesion, including in the field of culture and sports. There are differences in the way that Estonians and representatives of other nationalities consume culture. According to Statistics Estonia, Estonians were much more active than people of other nationalities in all cultural fields. The greatest difference was between the people going to the theatre and the library – with Estonians being much more active.

The Estonian Roma community feels a solidarity with Estonia and fellowship with Estonians, but lags far behind the rest of society in terms of socio-economic indicators. According to Statistics Estonia, in 2019 only 2% of Roma had a higher education, 22% had a general secondary or vocational education, 35% had a basic education, 27% had a primary education and 8% had no primary education. As a result, Roma employment is low (around 22%) and coping is difficult. People with severe coping difficulties are not ready to participate in civil society or contribute to society at large. In order to support the educational path of Roma children and increase their participation in public services, the Ministry of Culture launched a Roma mediating service in the Valga municipality in 2020, where about a third of the Estonian Roma live. The service is coordinated by INSA. In order to strengthen Roma civil society and empower the stakeholders, the Ministry of Culture has been implementing network development projects supporting the integration of Roma since 2018 with the support of the EU's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme.

A significant number of Estonians also live abroad – approximately 200,000 people. In order to help compatriots keep in touch with Estonia and Estonian culture and preserve Estonian cultural heritage abroad, the Ministry of Culture, through INSA application rounds, is supporting the following: contacts between cultural groups and creative people; cultural exchanges with Estonian communities abroad; the participation of Estonians abroad in major Estonian cultural events; summer language and cultural camps for young Estonians abroad; as well as supporting the return of compatriots to Estonia and offering them counselling and acclimation services.

The necessity of these activities is proven by the Compatriots Program 2009–2013 impact study prepared by The Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS) at the University of Tartu and the Baltic Research Institute.¹⁰ The survey revealed that the most important activities for Estonians abroad are those that enable people to enter the Estonian linguistic and cultural environment by coming to Estonia, i.e. studying in Estonia, interning in Estonian companies and participating in language camps. Therefore, funds from the budget of the Ministry of Culture are used to support the participation of Estonians abroad in Estonian song festivals, regional song and folklore festivals, and the summer Estonian language and culture camps for Estonian children living that facilitate the development of contacts between Estonian associations abroad with the Estonian national and local governments, cultural organisations and non-governmental organisations, and support activities (counselling, return support for low-income families) help compatriots to return. In cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Global Estonian web portal (<https://globalestonian.com/>) is being developed to facilitate the exchange of information.

A large majority (76%)¹¹ of the participants in the survey of Estonians living abroad conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2021 were interested in participating in the development of Estonia and satisfied with their involvement. In addition, the need for embassy newsletters was pointed out, which would provide information on, among other things, Estonian success stories and Estonian (cultural) events in the country of residence. Such regular exchange of information was seen, among other things, as an opportunity for cooperation ideas and synergies. According to EIM 2020, during their re-adjustment, the returnees to Estonia receive the most help from their relatives, friends and other close contacts, while only 8% have used the support services provided by the state. Most returnees are not aware of these services.

¹⁰ https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/ty_rahvuskaaslaste_uuring.pdf

¹¹ <https://vm.ee/et/uudised/valisministeeriumi-kusitlus-valismaal-elavad-eeslased-tahavad-osaleda-eesi-arengus>

In the period 2016–2020, the number of Estonian emigrants exceeded the number of Estonian immigrants, but starting in 2017, more Estonian citizens have immigrated to Estonia than emigrated from Estonia.¹² Estonian citizens have mainly migrated to Finland, which is the foreign country with the largest Estonian diaspora, as well as to Great Britain and Germany. Whereas, nine times more people went to Finland than to Great Britain. The largest number of returnees also came from Finland and Great Britain, but also from Russia.¹³

In the period 2014–2020, 768 people have returned to Estonia with the support of the compatriot program, and counselling services have been provided to 804 people. The INSA supports the return of Estonians and Estonian citizens who have been away from Estonia for a long time, or were born abroad, by providing financial support and counselling services to those in need. In 2017, return benefits were provided to 119 persons, in 2018 to 149 persons, in 2019 to 68 persons, and in 2020 to 55 persons. In the past about 77 people a year have been counselled within the framework of other activities, but since 2019, when a returnee counsellor started working, about 120 families have been counselled. In 2020, about 350 people participated in experiential counselling meetings for returnees. Great attention is paid to co-operation with local governments in the development of support measures for returnees. Since 2019, INSA has employed an information and co-operation specialist for compatriots, who manages and develops the Global Estonian web portal (<https://globalestonian.com/>), which provides information on the activities of the global Estonian community and helps to maintain contact with Estonia. To date, 470 Estonian societies, organisations and groups abroad, 320 Estonian community centres abroad and Estonian diplomatic missions, as well as 60 Facebook groups have joined the portal.

The final report of Integrating Estonia 2020 was prepared in 2021.

Measures, activities and services

Measure 1. Design, support and development of the integration policy

Goal of the measure: to ensure a legal and supportive environment conducive to integration.

¹² Statistics Estonia (2020), see [RVR08: External migration by age group, sex and citizenship](#).

¹³ Ministry of the Interior, European Migration Network Estonian Contact (2019). Survey of Migration Statistics 2014–2018. Estonia

Benchmarks for the measure

Name of the measure	Initial level (2020)	Target level 1 (2022)	Target level 2 (2023)	Target level 3 (2024)	Target level 4 (2025)
Integration policy is coordinated based the development plan in the field of integration. The partner ministries contribute to long-term goals and a functioning network has been established, yes/no <i>Source: Ministry of Culture</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Modernised legislation and grants meet the needs of the target group and an information and value space to support integration has been created, yes/no <i>Source: Ministry of Culture</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Description of the measure

This measure is divided into two activities - the development of integration, including adaptation policy, and the implementation of integration, including adaptation policy, within the framework of which a total of eight direct and indirect public services for integration will be provided.

Activity 1.1. Development of integration policy, including adaptation policy

Objective: Creating a legal and supportive environment conducive to integration. Integration policy, including adaptation, is designed and developed in an open, knowledge-based and inclusive way.

Activity benchmarks

Name of the measure	Initial level (2020)	Target level 1 (2022)	Target level 2 (2023)	Target level 3 (2024)	Target level 4 (2025)
Updated legislation meets the needs of the target group, yes/no <i>Source: Ministry of Culture</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Description of the activities

The implementation of the Cohesive Estonian Development Plan 2021-2030 is coordinated by the Minister of Culture, the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The task of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in implementing and directing the development plan is to implement the activities in their area of responsibility, to monitor the development plan, to synchronise the activities and dissent, and organise the reporting on and updating of the development plan.

The Undersecretary of Cultural Diversity at the Ministry of Culture, in co-operation with the Cultural Council of National Minorities formed by the Minister of Culture and the Ida-Viru County's Roundtable of National Cultural Societies, formulate the policies related to the cultural organisations of the minorities. A Roma Integration Council has been set up at the Ministry of Culture to address Roma integration issues and coordinate information.

A support network supporting the adaptation of new immigrants has been established in Estonia in order to develop an adaptation policy and create an effective and sustainable system of support services that facilitate adaptation.

Close co-operation is organised with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to monitor compliance with the obligations under international conventions of the United Nations and the Council of Europe and the rights of national minorities. Programmes for compatriots and kindred nations are implemented in co-operation with the Ministry of Education and Research.

In addition, the Ministry of Culture is a member of the European Commission's European Integration Network, the European Commission's National Roma Contact Point – NRCP and represents Estonia in the Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues - ADI-ROM.

The Ministry of Culture also plans to be the implementing agency for the European Social Fund (hereinafter ESF) during the new European Union funding period of 2021-2027 for the measure related to integration and Estonian-language learning.

The Department of Cultural Diversity is responsible for strategic planning and modernisation of legislation in the field of integration as well as adaptation.

Developmental needs

- The horizontal nature of integration, including adaptation, requires greater cooperation between ministries and policy makers to ensure the success of the process, including the awareness of existing services with local authorities, the third and private sectors and various service providers.
- Target groups are not aware of existing services, availability is limited by information fragmentation. Therefore, in addition to launching new activities and building bridges, just as much attention needs to be paid to raising the awareness of target groups so that people can easily understand what services are being offered to them, how they complement each other, and how they can benefit from taking advantage of the services.

The most important courses of action and new initiatives for the programming period:

- Implementation of the new sectoral development plan.
- Close co-operation between the Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities and ministries in order to involve local governments in the development of integration, including the adaptation field.
- The goal of the Ministry of Culture is to develop activities that enable local governments to contribute to, and implement, these activities.
- Ensuring the availability of information and support services that promote integration, including adaptation, for the target group.

Services:

Development of integration policy, including the adaptation policy

The planning and analysis of integration, including the adaptation policy, the organization of co-operation with co-operation partners and the provision of input for the development of sectoral policies in the context of integration and the collection of relevant information take place at the Ministry of Culture under the leadership of the Undersecretary for Cultural Diversity. Most policymaking takes place in the course of drafting and coordinating legislation and regulations. Cooperation with key partners and the involvement of the public is also important, which includes the organisation of an annual integration academy (cooperation seminar with representatives of the related ministries), the organisation of local forums in areas with high proportions of people of other nationalities.

Activity 1.2. Implementation of integration, including adaptation, policies

Goal: To ensure opportunities for people with different language and cultural backgrounds to actively participate in the life of Estonian society

To ensure opportunities for people with various language and cultural backgrounds to actively participate in life in Estonian society, to support minority cultures and promote co-operation between communities, and to create a common cultural and information field.

Activity benchmarks

Name of the measure	Initial level (2020)	Target level 1 (2022)	Target level 2 (2023)	Target level 3 (2024)	Target level 4 (2025)
Percentage of people who have completed free language courses under the INSA integration programme, % <i>Source:</i> Integration Foundation (INSA)	66 (2020)	80	80	80	80
The network of the organisations of national minorities, the state and other partners is operational, no/yes	Yes (2020)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

<i>Source: INSA</i>					
Opportunities have been created for closer contacts between Estonians and residents of other nationalities, no/yes <i>Source: INSA</i>	Yes (2020)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Estonian expatriate cultural societies that are supported, <i>Source: INSA</i>	20 (2020)	15	15	15	15
The grants that are provided meet the needs of the target group and an information and value space supporting integration has been created, no/yes <i>Source: Ministry of Culture</i>	Yes (2020)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Employment rate of Roma (15-74-year-olds) <i>Source: Ministry of Culture</i>	21% (2019)	21	22	23	24
Percentage of Roma 15 and older who have a secondary, vocational or higher education <i>Source: Ministry of Culture</i>	25,6 % (2019)	26%	27%	28%	29%

Description of the activities

The sub-agency, main partner and service provider is INSA, which is headquartered in Narva. Estonian Language Houses, which are structural units of INSA that started operating in 2019, are located in Tallinn and Narva.

The results of integration monitoring have shown that most of the INSA's well-established activities, i.e. language and citizenship training, projects for labour market support, support for the identity of national minorities, have proven to be useful in supporting and shaping integration processes. The founder of the foundation is the Republic of Estonia, on whose behalf the Ministry of Culture executes the founder's rights.

The partners in the implementation of adaptation activities include the Tallinn City Centre Government, Tartu Aliens Service Centre, Rakvere City Government, Police and Border Guard Board, Health Board of Estonia, IT and Development Centre of the Ministry of the Interior, the Civil Society Foundation, and Expat Relocation Estonia OÜ.

In the new EU funding period for 2021-2027, the Ministry of Culture also plans to be the implementing agency for the ESF in the measure related to integration and Estonian language learning.

Developmental needs

- *Cultural autonomy and national cultures of national minorities*

The Impact of the Participation of Estonian National Minorities in National Cultural Activities on their Ethnic Identity, a study conducted by INSA in 2017¹⁴ showed that, in order to support integration, it is important for national minorities to participate in, as well as understand and acquire, Estonian culture, as well as value and preserve their culture of origin. This has a positive effect on the ethnic and national identity of national minorities, their native linguistic skills and participation in society. However, the administrative capacity of the associations of national minorities needs to be further strengthened and their cooperation with Estonian organisations needs to be supported.

- *Counselling and information system*

¹⁴ https://www.kul.ee/sites/kulminn/files/id_uuringu_aruanne.pdf

- Improving living standards, economic growth and global migration trends have led to an increase in migration volumes. The diversification of the various immigrant groups (returnees, migrants, study and family migrants, beneficiaries of international protection, etc.) and short-term forms of migration impacts Estonia's ability to cope with migration, ensure social cohesion and support integration. Permanent residents of other nationalities with low levels of integration also continue to require attention. Therefore, counselling services that help target groups to cope better in Estonian society must be continued and further developed.
- Often, the language level of returnees and their knowledge of the organisation of Estonian society are insufficient for coping here and a large percentage of returnees' experience adjustment problems, even if they have only lived abroad for a relatively short period. The services aimed at returnees (counselling, including experience counselling, introduction of labour market opportunities, payment of benefits, etc.) require a unified development process. An important factor of the return policy is not only the number of returnees, but also the integration of the target group into the host society and entry into the Estonian labour market, which is why additional opportunities must be found to facilitate the adaptation of returnees to Estonian society.

Cooperation and communication

- Attention must be paid to shaping the value orientations of the entire society, increasing open attitudes and providing continued support the integration of permanent residents and new immigrants with a mother tongues and cultures other than Estonian, into society. The cohesiveness of society also depends on the readiness of Estonians to become involved. The need to offer activities that also involve Estonians and to encourage communication between different ethnic groups has increased. Support must be continued for the labour Russian- and English-language media in Estonia, thereby raising the awareness of people of other nationalities about what is happening in Estonian society.

Language learning and integration training

- The provision of free Estonian language training for adults by the state cannot meet the demand. The provision of language learning is hampered by long waiting lists, a shortage of qualified teachers, uneven access to language learning and the lack of

information. Insufficient attention has been paid to the practice of the Estonian language in the linguistic environment.

Compatriots

- More attention needs to be paid to diaspora policies i.e. regarding both returnees from the Estonian diaspora and cooperation with compatriots. Communication with Estonians abroad needs to be developed further. The goal is to enhance cooperation with Estonia's foreign missions, which are in contact with the local Estonians, as well as to promote cooperation and the exchange of information with compatriots abroad. A very important information channel for reaching the scattered Estonian community is the web portal uniting the interests and needs of both the state and the Estonian community abroad, which addresses the needs of the Estonian expatriate community regarding state services and the possibilities of receiving them in Estonia, and also delivers current information on state activities to the diaspora.

Cooperation with local governments

- Greater attention needs to be paid to co-operation between the local and national governments in the field of integration. In areas with fewer people who speak another language at home, the local authorities are less prepared to deal with adaptation and integration issues, and there may be a lack of knowledge about existing public services. The majority of local government development plans do not specifically address the issue of adaptation and integration. Closer cooperation with local governments is required for the implementation of adaptation and integration services for long-term permanent, but poorly integrated, residents.

Roma

- The representatives of the Estonian Roma community have a low educational level compared to the rest of society. As a result, they have more difficulty than others entering and remaining in the labour market and integrating into modern society. Roma have a low level of participation in civil society organisations, have significantly less trust in state institutions than other nationalities, and are much more likely to encounter intolerance because of their nationality.¹⁵ In order to promote the socioeconomic integration of the Roma, to strengthen the Roma national culture and identity that supports it and dispel

¹⁵ L. Karabeshkin, N. Derman. Eesti romade kuuluvustunne ja osalemine ühiskonnaelus. Tallinn, 2018.

stereotypes about the community, it is important to more effectively support the educational path of Roma youth, the participation of Roma in public services, the formation and capacity of Roma civil society organisations and the introduction of Roma culture and history to the Estonian population.

Key actions and new initiatives for the programming period:

Cultural autonomy and national cultures of national minorities

- Support for local governments intended for national minorities, including the relevant cultural societies and their umbrella organizations, and minority culture, is continued.
- The ESTROM¹⁶ project supporting Roma integration, launched in 2018 and supported by the European Commission, is continued, to promote cooperation and dialogue between integration stakeholders, Roma, local authorities and state institutions.

Kindred peoples

- The activities of the non-profit Fenno-Ugria NGO, which develops ties between Finno-Ugric peoples, cultural exchange as well as cultural contacts between kindred nations and the celebration of the Pan-Finno Ugric Day.

Counselling and information system

- The provision of adaptation services to compatriots and the establishment of a support network to facilitate people's return to Estonia will continue, including co-operation with local governments.
- The provision of Roma mentoring services in local governments will be continued with the aim of raising the awareness of the socio-economically disadvantaged Roma about their rights and responsibilities, improving the capacity of the public sector to guarantee these rights and bridging status gaps between the Roma and non-Roma communities.
- An adaptation program introducing Estonian society, language and culture to new immigrants, including returnees, will be continued.
- Adaptation and integration paths have been developed and implemented in local governments based on event service methodology.

¹⁶ <https://www.eestiromad.ee/>

Cooperation and communication activities

- Contacts between people of various nationalities will be intensified, for which services in the field of sports and culture will be developed.
- Cross-media programs have been implemented to increase social cohesion and raise public awareness of the citizens of other countries living in Estonia.
- Support is being given to (national) institutions and organisations to improve the exchange of information in other languages.
- Information about new services will be added to the Global Estonian web portal (<https://globalestonian.com/>) and it will become multilingual.

Language learning and integration instruction

- The learning of the Estonian language will be enhanced. The number of people who speak and actively use the Estonian language grows. High-quality Estonian language learning and a motivating communication environment are ensured for everyone. The startup-up of Estonian Language Houses will be facilitated. Estonian Language Houses have been established as INSA units in Tallinn and Narva, where Estonian language learning and supporting services were launched in premises set up for this purpose in 2019. Free Estonian language lessons and other activities that enable the use of the language are organised in the Estonian Language Houses.
- In-service training of teachers offering Estonian language instruction to adults continues and non-formal language learning activities for practicing the Estonian language also need more attention. Investments in IT solutions are needed to create additional language learning opportunities.
- In order to increase the communicative language skills of students aged 15-18 at Russian and Estonian general education schools, four-week student exchanges are organised between general education schools with different languages of instruction. Student exchanges support the ongoing educational reform and the transition to Estonian as the language of instruction at the upper secondary level.
- Estonian language learning has been implemented at the basic level of the adaptation programme.

Compatriots

- Through their activities, Estonian cultural societies operating abroad contribute to the preservation and development of the Estonian language and culture in the world, report on Estonian cultural events and help create a sense of belonging to the Estonian state in the Estonian communities abroad. Support measures are implemented by INSA. The measures contribute to the improvement of Estonia's reputation and influence abroad, the internationalisation of Estonian culture and the realisation of its export potential. Linguistic and cultural camps are organized for compatriots aged 13-18 who live abroad.
- The Global Estonian web portal (<https://globalestonian.com/>), which was transferred to INSA by the Central Council of Estonians in Canada in 2019, is maintained and developed throughout the year.

Roma

- To support the educational and socio-economic integration of the Roma, INSA provides mentoring services in local governments. The service focuses in particular on supporting the educational and cultural life of Roma children and young people and the inclusion of Roma in general public services.
- The network supporting Roma integration and the empowerment of Roma civil society will be further developed.
- By introducing Roma culture and history, the prejudices and negative stereotypes about the Roma community that have spread are being reduced.

External instruments, the European Social Fund

- the new ESF period, the Ministry of Culture will be responsible for implementing the following activities: informing the public about migration, adaptation and integration issues; Estonian language learning (incl. activities for language practice and civic education); promoting contacts between communities; supporting integration, including adaptation at local level; providing an adaptation program; implementing support activities to increase the competitiveness of people with various linguistic and cultural backgrounds and returnees in the labour market.

Services:

Supporting the cultural autonomy of national minorities

Supporting cultural self-administration in order to fulfil the objectives of the Law on Cultural Autonomy for National Minorities. The cultural self-administrations of the national minorities that meet the conditions for cultural autonomy prescribed in the Law on Cultural Autonomy for National Minorities are the target group for the service. The purpose of the service is to create conditions for the cultural self-administrations to fulfil the objectives arising from the Law on Cultural Autonomy for National Minorities through the updating of the law and support allocated from the state budget.

Support for national cultures

Support will be provided to partner organisations for the preservation and promotion of national cultures. The INSA will implement the Ministry of Culture application round for to provide operating support for the umbrella organisations of national minorities, as well as project grants for national minority organisations. In addition, the INSA provides mentoring services in local governments for the Roma in order to involve them into general public services. The Ministry of Culture will continue to develop a network in support of Roma integration and to strengthen Roma civil society. The introduction of Roma culture and history continues.

Supporting the implementation of the counselling and information system

Supporting the development and implementation of the INSA advisory and information system. The use of the service ensures the availability of information necessary for integration for the participants in the service (poorly integrated permanent residents, new immigrants, returnees, counsellors working in the areas of government of other ministries, local governments).

Support for cooperation and communication activities

Supporting partner organizations to promote cooperation. Supporting the implementation of projects in the field of culture and sports through application rounds implemented by INSA in the various regions of Estonia. The INSA helps to promote cooperation between the organisations dealing with integration and supports integration and intensify international contacts in Estonia, and thereby, expand the common information field and increase awareness about cultural diversity.

Supporting the provision of language learning and integration training

Support for integration training modules organised by the INSA (citizenship exam preparation module, culture module, language learning module (Estonian language proficiency A1, A2, B1, B2 and C1 level courses, and linguistic and cultural immersion)). Supporting the main activities of the Estonian Language Houses established by the INSA and activities related to the teaching of Estonian at the University of Tartu. The support promotes the Estonian language skills of poorly integrated permanent residents and new immigrants, their preparation for the Estonian citizenship exam and their participation in Estonian cultural and social life, and the in-service training of adult Estonian language teachers.

Support for compatriots

Supporting the organisation of language camps for Estonian children and young people living abroad with the funds allocated to the INSA. Supporting the implementation of cultural projects of the Estonians living abroad and returnees through INSA application rounds and counselling before and after their return. Supporting partner organizations and developing the Global Estonian web portal (<https://globalestonian.com/>).

Implementing adaptation policies

In cooperation with the public, private and third sector, targeted and customized customer-driven adaptation services are provided.

People in Estonia are living in a single reliable Estonian information space, and thanks to needs-based information channels, people are well informed about what is happening in Estonia. Regular, clear, factual and consistent public communication regarding adaptation and integration is ensured. As a result, the Estonian population's knowledge about adaptation, human rights and equal treatment will increase and the polarisation of society will decrease. The ability of public, private and third sector organizations to effectively provide services to people whose mother tongue is not Estonian is supported. The departments of local governments also provide more adaptation and integration services. The relations between partners have also been improved so that the cooperation between the providers of adaptation and integration services as become more effective and the parties are better aware of their roles.