

## Youth Partnership

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Partnership between the European Commission  
and the Council of Europe in the field of youth



# COUNTRY SHEET ON YOUTH POLICY IN ESTONIA



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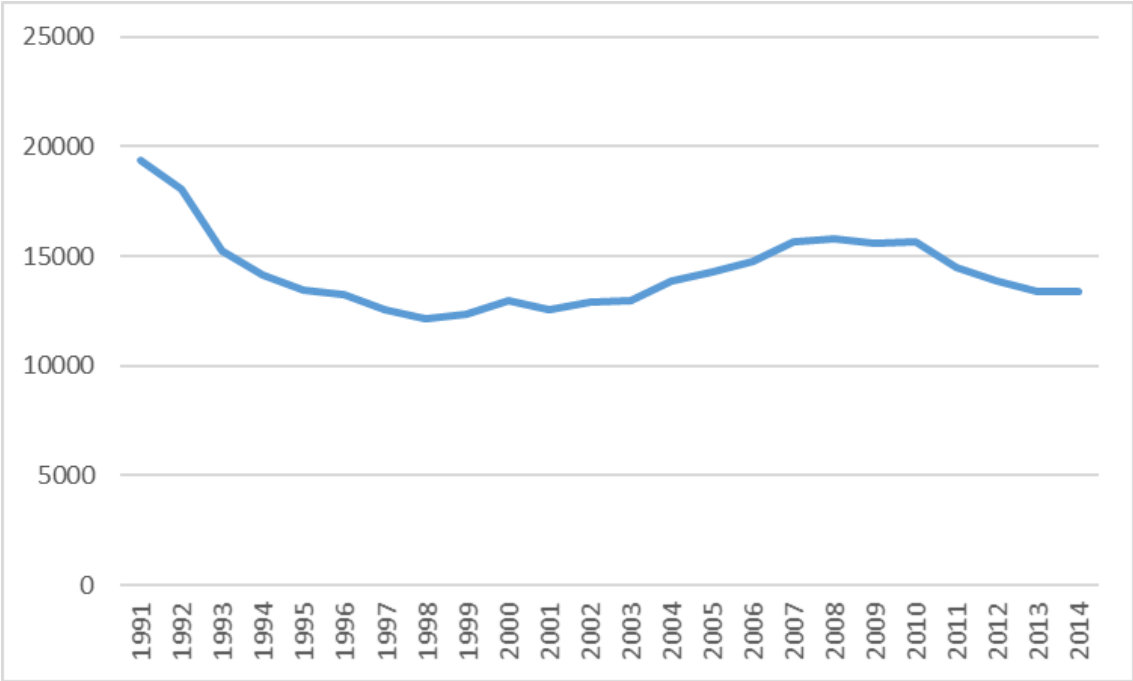
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# 1. Context and principles of national youth policy

## 1.1. Context of national youth policy

### 1.1.1 Aspects of the demographic context

As of 1 January 2015, the population of Estonia was estimated to be 1,313,271, which is 2,548 persons less than the year before. In 2014, the natural increase was negative, as the number of deaths (15,484) exceeded the number of births (13,551) by 1,933. The reason for the decrease was a sharp decline in the number of births since 2010 – compared to 2010 there were 2,274 fewer births in 2014. Since the restoration of independence in 1991, 2010 has been the only year when natural increase was positive: on that year, the number of births exceeded the number of deaths by 35. Graph 1 gives the number of births since the restoration of independence.



Graph 1. The number of live births 1991-2014 (Source: Statistics Estonia)

The average number of live births per 1000 women in 2014 was 46.1.

Over the period 2000-2014, net external migration has been negative in all years, ranging from -643 persons per year in 2007 to -3682 persons per year in 2012.

In the age group 0-19-year-olds, migration reflects moving together with parents mostly. In this group, average net external migration over the period of 2010-2014 was -637 people per year. Age group, 20-44-year-olds, is the most active regarding moving, for different reasons (studies in the younger age groups, job and family in the older age groups). In the age group of 20-29-year-olds, the average was -705 and in age group 30-44-year-olds, it was -711 persons per year.

In 01.01.2015, the largest ethnic groups were Estonians (66%), Russians (24%), Ukrainians (2%), Belorussians (1%) and Finns (1%).

In 01.01.2015, the proportion of the urban population was 63%. Among youth 15-29-year-olds, the proportion living in towns and cities was 65%, meaning that urban population is somewhat younger than the rural population.

### **1.1.2 Some aspects of institutional environment**

Estonia is a parliamentary democracy; administratively it is a unitary state. The Constitution provides for two other types of government with a significant degree of autonomy: local governments and cultural self-governments of ethnic minorities. At the beginning of 2016, administrative division of the country includes 15 counties, 30 towns and 183 rural municipalities (boroughs). Estonia is now going through administrative-territorial reform which means that the number of rural municipalities is decreasing since smaller units either merge voluntarily or are merged into large ones.

The Constitution also provides for the office of the Chancellor of Justice whose task is also to be Ombudsman for Children. The latter institution was established in 2011. Youth policy and youth work (policy) is coordinated by the Department of Youth Affairs at Ministry of Education and Research. Youth Work Act defines a young person as an individual aged 7-26 years. Though this is the only legislative act which sets age brackets of a category labeled “youth” or “young people”, there is a range of other laws, which determine rights and duties of different age groups in approximately the same age range. A more detailed overview of age ranges and associated rights and obligations of a person is given in the section on legislation.

Since 1991 when independence was restored, The Republic of Estonia has gone through significant social, administrative, political, economic changes on the road of breaking apart from Soviet Union system and setting up functioning structures of an independent state which is a member of the international community of independent states. Major landmarks on the road have been joining the Council of Europe in 1993, the European Union, NATO in

2004 and Eurozone in 2011. Becoming a member of these organisations initiated changes in the design of institutional buildup of the country's administrative political system and now it meets the standards of contemporary democracy.

While the beginnings of the modern field of youth in Estonia can be located in the late 1980s, its development in the 1990s was hampered because more pressing social, economic, political and administrative reforms were carried out. The development of the field of youth gained momentum at the end of 1990s and beginning of the 21st century and has notably been influenced by joining EU. In 1999, the Youth Work Act was approved by the Parliament and 2001 the Estonian Youth Work Concept and the Estonian Youth Work Development Plan for 2001-2004 were prepared. In 2006, the Government of the Republic approved the Youth Work Strategy 2006-2013. The objective of the strategy was to devise and implement coordinated and purposeful actions following the actual needs and challenges of young people in different spheres of life, i.e. the integrated youth policy. Youth work is one of the activity areas thereof besides education, culture, healthcare and other fields. In the Strategy, youth policy and youth work still appeared as separate fields. In 2013, Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 was adopted. This strategy address causes of problems pertaining to young people (such as the growing emigration of youth, the high unemployment rate of youth aged 15–19, the number of youth not studying or working, high relative poverty rate, problematic health behavior, in particular the risk behavior of young men) as well as strengthens positive trends. In the new Development Plan, youth work is seen as a policy measure helping to implement activities aimed to achieve policy goals in the field of youth.

Goals of the youth field for years 2014-2020 are spelled out in the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020. Adoption of the development plan is a next step toward consolidation of youth field as a separate policy field. The main goal of the development plan maintains that young people will have access to a comprehensive range of opportunities for (self-) development and self-realization and that the youth field will contribute to the development of social cohesion and creativity in society in general. The plan contains four sub-goals:

- young people have more choices in terms of discovering their own creative and development potential,
- young people face a lower risk of exclusion,
- greater support for the participation of young people in decision-making,
- the youth field operates more efficiently.

## **1.2 Principles of national youth policy**

Principles of national youth policy are outlined in the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020<sup>1</sup>:

- Addressing youth as a whole. In order to implement really efficient activities to achieve any objective or solve any problem concerning young people, it is necessary to observe young people's living in its entity as well as factors affecting it and not to stay within the limits of an area of administration of the institutions or fields;
- involvement of youth as means to ensure good quality and impact of the planned measures;
- achievement of the common impact or the pursuit to the greater common impact through the use of different fields and knowledge.

Main principles of the measures of the development plan:

- The target group consisting of youth is not homogeneous. In developing and implementing any measures and activities, the actual conditions and needs of specific group of young people must be followed and specificities arising from the gender, nationality, culture, state of health, place of residence, socio-economic situation, etc., must be taken into account.
- Youth work supports the health as well as values and attitudes promoting healthy lifestyle of youth through all the measures. This presumes the continuous development of competencies and tools of people working in the field of youth and relies on knowledge-based approach by target groups, training courses, tools and interventions.
- Youth affairs also contribute to the integration of society, including promotion of equality and prevention of discrimination as well as care for the surrounding environment.
- Upon developing and implementing measures of youth policy and youth work, it is important to assist youth in obtaining self-confidence and ability to cope with crucial spheres of life, such as studies, labour market, family relations, etc. The difficulties of youth must be early noticed and, if necessary, assistance must be provided to find the required professional support.
- Youth affairs form a part of the functioning cooperation between different areas related to the life of youth. If necessary, systemic cooperation must be initiated and the operation thereof must be supported.

### **1.2.1 View of young people**

In terms of major political ideologies, the view of young people expressed in the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 contains significant ideas from the liberal view of individuals

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<sup>1</sup> Homepage of the Ministry of Education and Research, <https://www.hm.ee/en/activities/youth/youth-policy>

and society. More concretely, the Development Plan builds on the libertarian understandings of good society and good members of society as well as on the paradigm of social investment state.

It is believed that the society and the social institutions come together from intentions and actions of private individuals. Hence, commonly shared aspects in society can be only as good as are individual members of the society. Using the “in-becoming” and “in-being” distinction, the Development Plan is fairly well balanced and sees young people as being members of society already now as well as a future resource for the society. The perspective of seeing young people as a future resource is reflected in the Development Plan through emphasizing the need to provide young people with adequate developmental opportunities. It is believed that from the range of provided opportunities, young people choose the ones who are most appropriate – that is, which they deem appropriate for themselves. The “in-being” aspect is reflected in emphasizing the need to assure that youth participates in society and has adequate opportunities for that. In general, young people are believed to carry the role of competent citizen and as a reflection of this belief voting age in local elections was lowered to 16 years in 2015. At the same time, the Development Plan recognizes that there are structural imbalances in a society which can be alleviated with a help from the state, using a range of (integrated youth) policy measures. This line of thinking and acting aligns with the ideas of the social investment state.

Regarding age, the Youth Work Act defines young people as persons in the age 7-26 years old. This age group is also seen as the primary target group of the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020. The age category is not seen as a homogeneous but as a heterogeneous category, consisting of subgroups having different characteristics, features. Some of the groups are defined by other legal Acts (for an overview, see the section on legislation), other by less formalized criteria.

Political-administrative organisation of youth policy is concentrated in the Ministry of Education and Research, in the Youth Affairs Department. Estonia is a unitary state; there is no separate territorial organisation.

## 2 Statistics on young people

Statistical figures on young people are obtained from Statistics Estonia ([www.stat.ee](http://www.stat.ee)).

**Table 1. Youth population 01.01.2015**

	Total population	15-19-year-olds	20-24-year-olds	25-29-year-olds
Men	614389	30759	40480	50866
Women	698882	29083	38013	47331
Total	1313271	59842	78493	98197

Source: Statistics Estonia

**Table 2. Percentage of youth categories in total population**

	15-19-year-olds	20-24-year-olds	25-29-year-olds
Men	2,3%	3,1%	3,9%
Women	2,2%	2,9%	3,6%
Total	4,6%	6,0%	7,5%

Source: Statistics Estonia

**Table 3. Population forecast**

	total population	men, 15-19 yo	women, 15-19 yo	men, 20-24 yo	women, 20-24 yo	men, 25-29 yo	women, 25-29 yo
2020	1297404	31902	30212	30506	28489	39783	36844
2025	1275996	37698	35462	31653	29701	30083	27737
2030	1250727	36544	34318	37432	34888	31251	29068
2035	1222948	34519	32475	36309	34035	37110	34454
2040	1194629	32088	30205	34286	32441	36033	33883

Source: Statistics Estonia

**Table 4. Percentage of youth population in total population, forecast**

	men, 15-19 yo	women, 15-19 yo	men, 20-24 yo	women, 20-24 yo	men, 25-29 yo	women, 25-29 yo
2016	2,3%	2,2%	2,8%	2,7%	3,9%	3,6%
2020	2,5%	2,3%	2,4%	2,2%	3,1%	2,8%
2025	3,0%	2,8%	2,5%	2,3%	2,4%	2,2%
2030	2,9%	2,7%	3,0%	2,8%	2,5%	2,3%
2035	2,8%	2,7%	3,0%	2,8%	3,0%	2,8%
2040	2,7%	2,5%	2,9%	2,7%	3,0%	2,8%

Source: Statistics Estonia



## 3 Actors and Structures

### 3.1 Public authorities

#### 3.1.1 National public authorities:

Ministry in charge of youth: Estonian Ministry of Education and Research<sup>2</sup>.

Minister: Mrs. Mailis Reps; next national elections will be held in March 2019.

Department responsible for youth: Youth Affairs Department.

Main goals of the department:

- Developing legislation to ensure appropriate legislative environment for implementing youth policy.
- Ensuring purposefulness and consistency in implementation of youth policy.
- Planning of resources necessary for implementation of youth policy.
- Ensuring cohesiveness of youth policy.
- Holding a public dialogue with partners to come to a social agreement on questions pertaining to youth policy.

The department carries out a range of tasks to achieve the goals listed above. The main function of the department is to arrange activities pertaining to youth policy and youth at the Ministry of Education and Research and to consult the Minister and other ministerial officials in youth policy and youth work related themes.

Number of people who work in this ministry in the youth department: 6

Director responsible for youth affairs in the Ministry: Ms. Reelika Ojakivi, Acting head of the Youth Affairs Department, [reelika.ojakivi@hm.ee](mailto:reelika.ojakivi@hm.ee).

Contact person in the youth department competent for European youth policy: Mr. Ardo Rohtla, Deputy Head of Youth Affairs Department, [ardo.rohtla@hm.ee](mailto:ardo.rohtla@hm.ee)

#### 3.1.2 Other national public bodies who are directly involved in youth policies

A range of other ministries influence the lives of young people. A more significant role is carried out by the following ministries:

- Ministry of Social Affairs, <http://www.sm.ee/en>
- Ministry of the Interior, <https://www.siseministerium.ee/en>
- Ministry of Justice, <http://www.just.ee/en>

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<sup>2</sup> Homepage of the Ministry of Education and Research , <http://www.hm.ee/en>

- Ministry of Culture, <http://www.kul.ee/en>
- Ministry of Defense, <http://www.kaitseministeerium.ee/en>

### **Parliament commission in charge of youth issues**

Name: **Cultural Affairs Committee** (Kultuurikomisjon),  
<http://www.riigikogu.ee/en/parliament-of-estonia/committees/cultural-affairs-committee/>.

Name of chairman: Ms. Laine Randjärv

Role and competence: The Committee conducts as leading committee for the proceedings of culture-, education- and research-related draft Acts, draft resolutions and statements of the Riigikogu (Estonian Parliament) and Acts of ratification of or accession to international conventions and agreements.

**Estonian Youth Work Centre** (Eesti Noorsootöö Keskus)<sup>3</sup>, is a national centre for youth work under the administrative authority of the Ministry of Education and Research. Its main objective is to develop and organise youth work in the framework of the national youth policy. It:

- Implements the Estonian Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 and performs other functions arising from the Youth Work Act and other relevant laws;
- Develops international co-operation;
- Co-ordinates networking activities;
- Awards and recognizes the professional qualifications of youth workers;
- Recognizes the knowledge and skills acquired through youth work;
- Assesses the quality of youth work;
- Manages national youth monitor;
- Finances projects and programs;
- Advises youth work organisers;
- Manages the Kloogaranna youth camp;
- Organises the Youth Information Fair „Teeviit“.

### **3.1.3 Regional public authorities with competencies in the youth field**

There is no regional level of self-government in Estonia. However, Estonia is divided into 15 counties, each with its own county government. A county is an administrative subdivision of Estonia. Each county's government is led by a governor who represents the national government at the regional level. County governors are appointed by the national

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<sup>3</sup> Homepage of Estonian Youth Work Centre, <https://www.entk.ee/eng/estonia-youth-work-centre>

government for a term of five years. Each county is divided into municipalities of two types: urban municipalities (towns) and rural municipalities (parishes).

County governors have their own local administration apparatus, and they carry out also some youth work / youth policy activities. Each of the county governments employs one staff member responsible for carrying out youth work and youth policy activities. County governments also employ officials who, among other duties, perform tasks related to the youth field: education and schooling, sports, cultural events, social assistance, delinquent behavior, youth with special needs. Providing youth information to youth on the county level is a responsibility of county government too.

Pursuant to the Youth Work Act, county governors shall:

- Co-ordinate implementation of the national youth policy in the county,
- Analyse youth work in the county and prepare overviews of youth work,
- Supervise use of funds allocated for youth work from the state budget,
- Fulfill other functions arising from legislation.

Development plans developed by county governments contain a section on youth – ‘a youth policy development plan’ – but there is no legislation at this level.

County governments appear amongst sites for youth participation. Youth participation takes place through county youth councils. County youth councils are youth organisations for young people aged 15-26 years, which work together with county government. County youth councils are active in all 15 counties.

Juvenile Sanctions Act stipulates that a committee of juvenile issues is formed at a county government. Committees of juvenile issues have been formed and are functioning in all 15 counties. In 2014, Government approved memorandum, which relocates the system of juvenile committees from youth field (area of responsibility of the Youth Affairs Department at the Ministry of Education and Research) to child protection field (Child and Family Policy Department at the Ministry of Social Affairs). The change was enacted in 2016.

### **3.1.4 Local public authorities with competencies in the youth field**

Estonia is territorially divided into counties, rural municipalities and cities. Rural municipalities and cities are of equal legal status. Estonia has a one-tier local government system since 1993. In the end of 2016, there was 213 municipalities among which there were 30 cities and 183 rural municipalities. The size of local governments is very different. The biggest municipality is the capital city Tallinn (443 894 inhabitants in November of 2016<sup>4</sup>). One fifth of local government units (n=39) have less than 1000 inhabitants and two-thirds have less than

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<sup>4</sup> Homepage of Tallinn, <http://www.tallinn.ee/est/Tallinna-elanike-ary>, accessed 26.11.2016

3000 inhabitants.<sup>5</sup> The number of municipalities is decreasing gradually because smaller units either merge voluntarily or are merged by national government in the process of administrative-territorial reform.

The main function of a local government is to organise and manage local issues. The responsibilities of local governments are determined by the Local Government Organisation Act, and by other acts, contracts and agreements. Among its functions, local governments carry out several, which carry significant relevance in the youth field.

### **Education**

Local governments are responsible for the organisation of the maintenance of pre-, basic and secondary schools, if they are in the ownership of the local government, by covering their operational expenses. The teachers of municipal schools get paid from the local government's budget; funds for it are allocated from the state budget. According to the Estonian legislature, local governments also have to organise students' transport to educational facilities.

### **Culture and sports**

Local governments are responsible for the organisation of the maintenance of libraries, community centers, museums, sports facilities and other local agencies if these are in the ownership of the local government. In the sports sphere local governments organise and fund local sports events held on their territory.

### **Healthcare**

Healthcare is funded by the Estonian Health Insurance Fund, which has its own budget. Local governments, however, are responsible for the provision of first level health care services (family physician) and the organisation of the health care institutions (family health centers) located on their territory.

### **Social welfare services**

In the social welfare sphere the local government is responsible for the organisation of the maintenance of shelters, care homes and other social welfare institutions, if they are in the ownership of the local government. Furthermore, local government is responsible for organising social assistance and the welfare for persons in need of aid.

Pursuant to the Youth Work Act and the Local Governments Organisation Act, a local government is responsible for the organisation of youth work in its administrative territory. Under the Youth Work Act, rural municipality and city councils:

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<sup>5</sup> The Ministry of Finance, <http://www.fin.ee/kov>, accessed 26.11.2016

- determine the priorities of youth work in their administrative territories and set out the tasks necessary for the achievement thereof in the rural municipality or city development plans;
- work out the order for granting financial support to youth organisations;
- in the presence of financial means, offer financial support to youth organisations;
- consult local youth council in youth work matters;
- prepare the order of project camps at the territory of the municipality;
- perform other functions connected with the organisation of youth work in their administrative territories.

The local government decides objectives of youth work that shall be implemented in its territory as well as determines youth work methods. The Youth Work Act stipulates that upon preparation of the development plan, representatives of youth associations must be included in the process. Local government often delegates its youth work duties to the third sector by outsourcing certain services, if possible.

Budgets of local governments appear amongst important sources to finance youth work. Local municipalities support hobby education outside formal education system and in schools, youth centers, youth projects, youth associations and other forms of youth work. In many municipalities, open youth centers are central institutions for carrying out youth work. Youth centers are managed either by local government directly or by a private organisation that has been contracted by the municipality to provide youth work services. Majority of private organisations in the field of youth and youth work get most of their finances from local governments.

Local governments and city district governments in Tallinn appear amongst sites for youth participation. Youth participation takes place through municipal youth councils, which are defined in the Youth Work Act. Municipal youth councils are youth organisations for young people aged 13-26 years, which work together with local municipalities at local level. A national program supports youth participation through municipal youth councils. In the beginning of 2016, municipal youth councils were active in 74 municipalities. In Tallinn, Tallinn youth council has organised city district roundtables which give young people an opportunity to participate in administration and politics of the city.

Youth councils are involved mainly in the areas that are relevant for children and youth: leisure time, youth work and non-formal learning. They are also involved in related areas like public transport, using school facilities, community associations and organisations, and in other similar areas, which border youth work. Youth councils work together with local government, more concretely with municipal committees like Educational Committee,

Transport Committee etc. They also participate in budget processes. Youth councils are in contact with other youth organisations as well as with student councils at schools located within borders of a municipality.

Though municipal youth councils are open to all young people aged 13-26 years, in reality there are very few participants from the younger end of the age range. Members of the councils are usually active also in other youth organisations, often in school student council.

Juvenile Sanctions Act maintains that committees of juvenile issues may also be formed at the municipal level. In 2014, the committees were formed and functioning in 15 counties, in 45 municipalities and separately in 8 Tallinn city districts. Altogether 68 juvenile committees were functioning in 2014.

## **3.2 Youth welfare services**

The following section gives an overview of welfare services in the **narrow meaning** – services and benefits aimed to assure coping of a person / family, as well as in the **wider meaning** – services provided to assure well-being and socialization of young people.

### **3.2.1 Welfare services and benefits**

In the Republic of Estonia, welfare services in the narrow sense are organised in accordance with the Social Welfare Act, adopted in 1995. Pursuant to the act, "social welfare" means a system of procedures related to the provision or grant of social services, social benefits, emergency social assistance and other assistance. "Coping" means the physical or psychosocial ability of a person or family to manage in everyday life. "Social service" means a nonmonetary benefit, which contributes towards the ability of a person or family to cope. "Social benefit" means a monetary benefit provided to contribute towards the ability of a person or family to cope. The following have the right to receive social services, social benefits and other assistance:

- permanent residents of Estonia,
- aliens residing in Estonia on the basis of residence permits or right of residence,
- persons enjoying international protection staying in Estonia.

Social welfare is administered by the Minister of Social Affairs, the county governors and the local governments. State social welfare is administered by the Minister of Social Affairs and the county governors. County governors administer state social welfare in counties through the appropriate department of the county government. Local government social welfare is administered by the rural municipality or city government.

Social welfare institutions having relevance for youth are:

- substitute homes – places for the provision of the substitute home service to children,
- residential educational institutions – institutions established for living, care, development and education for disabled school-age children.

In November 2016, there were 29 substitute homes<sup>6</sup>, which provided both the substitute home service and youth home service.

In November 2016, 40 schools appeared in the list of residential educational institutions, providing living space for 652 pupils.<sup>7</sup>

There are two kinds of **social benefits**:

- Subsistence benefit,
- Needs-based family benefit.

### **Subsistence benefit**

The subsistence benefit is state assistance for those suffering from material deprivation. The benefit is paid by the local government. The subsistence level is the term for the amount necessary for minimum daily subsistence over a period of one month.

The subsistence level depends on the number of people in a family. The subsistence benefit is paid to those living below the subsistence level, including to people without a place of residence, for buying food, clothing and other staple goods and services.

In 2016, the subsistence limit is 130 euros a month for a person living alone or firstborn member of a family, and 104 euros for the second and each succeeding member of a family (130 euros for every underage family member). Recipients of subsistence benefits all of whose family members are juvenile have the right to receive, along with the subsistence benefit, supplementary social benefit of 15 euros.

### **Needs-based family benefit**

If at least one member of a family is a child receiving child allowance on the basis of the State Family Benefits Act, the family has the right to receive a needs-based family benefit provided that the average monthly net income of the family is below the income threshold of needs based family benefit.

In 2015, the benefits were 19.18 EUR per month for a family with 1 child and 38.36 EUR per month for a family with 2 or more children. Local municipalities have the right to pay additional benefits.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.eesti.ee/est/kontaktid/lastekodud>, accessed 26.11.2016

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/110032016020?leiaKehtiv>, accessed 26.11.2016

### **3.2.2 Education**

By law, children who attain 7 years of age by October 1 of the current year are subject to the obligation to attend school. Students are subject to the obligation to attend school until they acquire basic education (9 years of full-time studies in formal education system) or attain 17 years of age. The Act also foresees study opportunities for people older than 17 and who have not acquired basic education. Acquisition of basic education in state and municipal schools is without tuition i.e. it is financed from national and local budgets.

For individuals of at least 18 years of age and without having obtained basic education, a limited number of study places in state-financed vocational training programs are available.

#### **3.2.2.1 Education allowances and loans**

Several policy measures support acquisition of education. Financial aid for studies and education allowance are regulated by Study Allowances and Study Loans Act, adopted in 2003. According to the Act, students acquiring secondary vocational education and higher education can apply for a student loan, state education allowance or various scholarships.

#### **Education allowances<sup>8</sup>**

Education allowances are paid from the state budget every month on the basis of the decision of the educational institution to students who have applied through an educational institution.

- Needs-based study allowance,
- Basic allowance and supplementary allowance,
- Doctoral allowance,
- Special allowance,
- Study loan,
- Student house allowance,
- Commuting and transportation allowance,
- School lunch allowance,
- First-grade entering allowance,
- School-start allowance,
- Tuition loan (is a loan that can be used to pay only for paid studies),
- Education loan is a loan for undergraduate students, master's degree and doctoral students enrolled in daytime study, for covering monthly costs of living or tuition. An

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education loan makes it possible for students not eligible for a study loan to take out a loan. A loan can also be applied for by parents for financing their children's training.

### 3.2.3 Youth work<sup>9</sup>

Youth Work Act stipulates that youth work is the creation of conditions to promote the diverse development of young persons which enable them to be active outside their families, formal education system and work, on the basis of their free will. Youth work is a youth policy area which cuts across other policy areas. Also, youth work sets young person in the center of attention.

Youth work is carried out by a range of actors. The list of youth work service providers includes:

- Local municipalities,
- Archimedes Foundation Youth Agency (Estonian NA for Erasmus+),
- Youth organisations and associations,
- Hobby schools and rings, including sports as a form of hobby education,
- Youth centers,
- Youth recreation camps,
- Formal education system (student councils and hobby rings),
- Counseling and information centers,
- Juvenile delinquency committees.

Pursuant to Youth Work Act adopted in 2010, the following shall be supported from the state budget through the budget of the Ministry of Education and Research:

- youth programs and youth projects,
- national programs for developing youth work,
- youth studies,
- youth work agencies,
- international cooperation in the field of youth work,
- training youth workers,
- youth work associations,
- activities of youth organisations (annual grant).

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<sup>9</sup> State Gazette 2010, 44, 262, Youth Work Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/515012016004/consolide/current>.

An important aspect of youth policy and youth work policy is quality management of youth work service and assurance of quality of the service. Quality management in the field of youth policy and youth work (policy) is implemented in six areas:

- activities of national level youth field actors are monitored and coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Research and the EYWC. The EYWC is responsible for running youth monitoring system, consisting of a system of indicators of youth living conditions, a yearbook and a database of research on young people.
- local municipalities use youth work quality evaluation system to assess and improve provision of youth work service;
- youth centers, youth organisations, youth information and counselling and juvenile committees use quality management guidelines to plan, carry out and evaluate their activities;
- ministries and youth work actors commission independent evaluation research of their activities and use the obtained results to improve their activities;
- professionals working with young people are required to meet professional standards.

Professional standards have been adopted for a range of specialists who work with young people directly (e.g. youth worker, career counselor, youth information specialist, youth camp manager-teacher and other professionals working with children and youth);

- youth worker education and training – youth worker degree programs are provided by three institutions of tertiary education:
  - Tallinn University runs a bachelor level program of applied higher education in youth work and starting from 2015 also an MA program in youth work;
  - Viljandi Culture Academy of the University of Tartu runs a bachelor level program of applied higher education in leisure time manager-teacher;
  - Narva College of the University of Tartu runs a bachelor level program of applied higher education in youth work ;
- A wide range of non-degree training courses are organised by Archimedes Foundation Youth Agency (Estonian NA for Erasmus+) and by the EYWC. In addition, youth organisations themselves organise trainings for volunteers and youth leaders.

In 2013, youth service provision was characterized by the following figures:

- 237 youth centers;
- 526 organisations offering hobby education;
- 81 active youth councils;
- 20 county-level information and counseling centers;

- More than 43 youth associations and youth organisations;
- Youth projects and events.

Altogether, there are more than 800 organisations offering youth work services and more than 5000 youth workers.

Youth work services and methods are integrated into implementing Youth Guarantee in Estonia since it is believed that youth work as an environment for non-formal learning supports increase in employability of young people.

### **3.2.4 Youth and labor market**

#### **Unemployment measures**

At a national level, Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund Töötukassa is the key actor.

Currently the fund offers a range of active labor market measures. In 2005, the number of active labor market measures was 5, in 2014 there were 14 different active labor market measures. In addition to ALMPs, a range of services and more traditional labor market benefits were available too. Ministry of Social Affairs is implementing the European Youth Guarantee program.

Unemployment fund offers several measures that help young people in hard times at labor market:

- Career counseling;
- Work practice and internship;
- Subsidized salary (paid to young people). Certain amount is paid to employers so that they could employ unemployed young people;
- Professional training.

There are two kinds of **transfers to unemployed persons**:

- unemployment insurance benefit and
- unemployment allowance.

#### **Unemployment insurance benefit<sup>10</sup>**

- To be eligible for the unemployment insurance benefit, contributions have to be paid for a person for at least 12 months during the past 36 months. Also, previous employment must have ended through no fault of the person. In addition, actively searching for work is a

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.tootukassa.ee/eng/content/financial-benefits/eligibility-requirements-and-insurance-period>

requirement to receive the benefit. The amount of the unemployment insurance benefit depends on one's insurance record.

### **Unemployment allowance<sup>11</sup>**

If one does not meet the conditions to receive an unemployment insurance benefit, or if one has exhausted one's rights to a benefit, one may still qualify for the unemployment allowance. The unemployment allowance is paid to unemployed persons who do not qualify for the unemployment insurance benefit, who actively look for work, who have worked or finished full-time studies, and who have an income that is less than the allowance. The requirement to be involuntarily unemployed does not apply. The unemployment allowance is 112.22 eur per month in 2014 and it is paid for a maximum period of 270 days.

### **Youth guarantee<sup>12</sup>**

The aim of the Youth Guarantee is to ensure that young people under the age of 25 receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. In addition to the existing measures preventing youth unemployment (education, youth work, career services and labor market services), the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Social Affairs have outlined measures for the following ESF period (2014-2020) to prevent and reduce youth unemployment. The additional measures are planned to strengthen the concurrence of different existing measures and to focus on helping weaker target groups. Youth Guarantee activities began in 2015.

## **3.2.5 Measures targeted to support young families and families with children. Family benefits**

### **State family benefits**

State family benefits are regulated by State Family Benefits Act<sup>13</sup>. There are nine categories of family benefits:<sup>14</sup>

1. Childbirth allowance,
2. Adoption allowance,
3. Child allowance,
4. Child care allowance,
5. Single parent's child allowance,

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.tootukassa.ee/eng/content/financial-benefits/unemployment-allowance>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.sm.ee/et/noortegarantii>

<sup>13</sup> State Gazette I, 22.12.2013, 72, State Family Benefits Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/514012014002/consolide/current>.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.sm.ee/en/family-benefits>

6. Conscript's child allowance,
7. Foster care allowance,
8. Start in independent life allowance,
9. Allowance for families with seven or more children.

### **3.2.6 Healthcare and disease prevention**

Healthcare and disease prevention is organised in accordance with Health Insurance Act and Health Services Organisation Act. In general, an insured person is a permanent resident of the Republic of Estonia or a person living in Estonia by virtue of a temporary residence permit or by the right of permanent residence, who pays the social tax for himself/herself or for whom the payer of social tax is required to pay social tax. The list of insured persons includes also conscripts and persons receiving childcare allowance. According to the Health Insurance Act persons for whom no social tax is paid are considered as having equal status to the insured person. The persons having equal status include also pregnant women, persons under 19 years of age, pupils and students, who are permanent residents of Estonia. By law, health insurance covers pupils enrolled in basic education level until 21 years of age and pupils enrolled in secondary education level until 24 years of age, individuals enrolled in vocational education programs, students enrolled in a tertiary education institution.

Costs of health insurance are covered by Estonian Health Insurance Fund. In order to provide health insurance benefits, the Health Insurance Fund carries out a range of duties.<sup>15</sup>

#### **Programs to support youth health**

##### **Young athlete health monitoring program**

Started in 2009, the program is targeted to young athletes aged 9-19 years and training at least 5 hours per week (in addition to physical education lessons at school). Young athletes did go through medical examination earlier too; in 2009 national program was started which foresees long-term goals and expansion of monitoring and testing health of youth. In 2013, approximately 11 000 young athletes, 9-19 years old, went through health check within this program.

##### **Pupils' health check at school**

Pupils in schools go through dental and medical check in grade 7 (13-14-year-olds), in grade 9 (15-16-year-olds) and grade 11 (17-18-year-olds). In case health problems or deviation

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.haigekassa.ee/en>

from normal development, a young person is advised to visit either a general practitioner / a family physician or a medical specialist.

### **3.2.7 Non-public actors/structures & youth services with competencies in the youth field**

This section looks at the organisations in the context of four sub-goals outlined in the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020:

- Young people have more opportunities to open their creative and developmental potential,
- The risk of social exclusion is reduced,
- Youth participation is supported more,
- Youth field is more effective.

The main goal of the development plan maintains that young people have access to a wide set of opportunities for self-development and self-realization, which also supports development of social cohesion and creativity in society. The list below is based on the goals of the development plan which call for a wider look, not limited youth work only, or to any other narrow sector only.

#### **Estonian Teachers' Association (Õpetajate Liit<sup>16</sup>)**

ETA is a non-profit organisation which pursues the aim to assure high professional level of teaching and teachers. The association has taken the responsibility to assure professional development of teachers so that the teacher could adequately respond to the needs of changing society. It is responsible for organising qualification exams for different levels of teachers. The association is an umbrella organisation of 13 specialized teacher organisations.

#### **Young People Get Back to School! (Noored Kooli!<sup>17</sup>)**

The aim of the program is to recruit talented and capable recent university graduates to teach at primary and secondary schools. It follows the models Teach for America and Teach First (UK) and provides the talented young people who choose to get back to school and work as teachers with teacher training and leadership development program. The program is run by a non-governmental foundation.

#### **Foundation Healthy Estonia (sihtasutus Terve Eesti<sup>18</sup>)**

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.opetajateLiit.ee/> (in Estonian only)

<sup>17</sup> [www.nooredkooli.ee](http://www.nooredkooli.ee/) (in Estonian only)

The foundation is a coalition of enterprises which target the problem and prevention of HIV/AIDS in Estonia. The enterprises organise trainings, information campaigns, volunteering events and HIV/AIDS testing with an aim to prevent people from getting infected with HIV and to integrate infected people in working life.

**Estonian Sexual Health Association (Eesti Seksuaaltervise Liit<sup>19</sup>)**

Estonian Sexual Health Association (ESHA) offers reproductive health counseling and prevention of STI-s service to young people under 24 years of age. The ESHA runs 16 youth counseling centers and webpage [www.amor.ee](http://www.amor.ee) which provides online youth counseling.

**The Estonian Chamber of Disabled People<sup>20</sup> (Eesti Puuetega Inimeste Koda)**

**Estonian Special Youth Work Organisation NoOR<sup>21</sup> (Eesti Erinoorsootöö Ühing NoOR)**

**Kodukant, the Estonian Village Movement<sup>22</sup> (Külaliikumine Kodukant)**

**Gateway to Volunteering (Vabatahtlike Värav<sup>23</sup>)**

The portal brings together those who search for volunteering opportunities and those who offer the opportunities. It also organises trainings and awareness raising events.

**Estonian Fund for Nature<sup>24</sup> (Eestimaa Looduse Fond)**

**Society of Estonian Career Counsellors<sup>25</sup> (Karjäärinõustajate Ühing)**

**Sports associations and sports clubs<sup>26</sup>**

In Estonian Sports Register, altogether 64 sports associations are registered. Football being the most popular sports with 192 member sports clubs and 18987 practitioners in January 2016. Basketball is played in 170 member sports clubs and by 8488 practitioners, volleyball in 168 clubs, other associations have a smaller number of member clubs.

**Estonian School Hobby Teachers Union (Eesti Huvijuhtide Liit<sup>27</sup>)**

The union was established in 2000 and it brings together hobby education teachers from different places. Its main goals are to a) organise cooperative activities of school youth

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.terve-eesti.ee/> (in Estonian only)

<sup>19</sup> [www.estl.ee](http://www.estl.ee) (in Estonian only)

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.epikoda.ee/in-english>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.erinoor.ee/en>

<sup>22</sup> <http://kodukant.kovtp.ee/web/eng>

<sup>23</sup> [www.vabatahtlikud.ee](http://www.vabatahtlikud.ee) (in Estonian only)

<sup>24</sup> <http://elfond.ee/en>

<sup>25</sup> <http://kny.ee/en/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.spordiregister.ee/> (in Estonian only)

<sup>27</sup> <http://eestihuvijuht.blogspot.com.ee/> (in Estonian only)

workers and b) represent school youth workers at different levels and forums. It had 78 individual members in January 2016.

#### **Estonian Association of Youth Counselors** (Eesti Noorsootöötajate Ühendus<sup>28</sup>)

This is an organisation which unites professional as well as volunteer youth councilors in Estonia. Its main goal is to develop local, regional and national level youth work, arrange activities for its members and help to develop life of young people in Estonia. In January 2016, the organisation had 60 individual members.

#### **Association of Estonian Open Youth Centers** (Eesti ANK<sup>29</sup>)

The association is an umbrella organisation of youth centers in Estonia. It was established in 2001. It had 141 members in May 2015 while the total number of youth centers in 2013 was around 237.

#### **Foundation Estonian Children's Fund** (SA Eesti Lastefond<sup>30</sup>)

Estonian Children's Fund was founded on February 12, 1988, and it is the oldest organisation continually protecting children in Estonia.

#### **Estonian Union for Child Welfare**<sup>31</sup> (Eesti Lastekaitseliit)

#### **Adoption Support Center Oma Pere**<sup>32</sup> (Lapsendamiskeskus Oma Pere)

#### **Family counseling center You and Me** (Perekeskus Sina ja Mina<sup>33</sup>)

The NGO organises parenting trainings and offers face-to-face as well as internet counseling to families with children.

### **3.2.8 Youth Councils**

#### **Estonian National Youth Council**<sup>34</sup> (Eesti Noorteühenduste Liit)

The council is an umbrella organisation established in 2002. ENYC promotes cooperation between youth associations and active participation of young people in society. ENYC is working for recognition and participation of young people.

#### **Federation of Estonian Student Unions**<sup>35</sup> (Eesti Üliõpilaskondade Liit)

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.eny.org.ee/> (in Estonian only)

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.ank.ee/avaleht/> (in Estonian only)

<sup>30</sup> <http://elf.ee/> (in Estonian only)

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.lastekaitseliit.ee/en/>

<sup>32</sup> <http://omapere.ee/en/>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.sinamina.ee/> (in Estonian or Russian only)

<sup>34</sup> [www.enl.ee/en](http://www.enl.ee/en)

<sup>35</sup> <http://eyl.ee/?lang=en>



The federation was founded in 1991, shortly after Estonia regained independence. The FESU currently represents over 90% of Estonian students. EYL's main goal is to represent students' interests on national level.

### **Estonian School Student Council Union (Eesti Õpilasesinduste Liit<sup>36</sup>)**

Estonian School Student Council Union, founded in 1998, is a non-governmental politically independent organisation based on students' active voice. Now it is the only organisation in Estonia, which represents Estonian secondary and vocational school students from all over Estonia on the national and international levels as well. In 2014, the organisation united 192 school student councils representing approximately 100 000 students.

### **County youth councils**

On county level, there are youth councils in all 15 counties. The main rationale for creating county level youth councils was to create opportunities for young people to participate in policy processes, which have direct influence on youth. County level youth council is a connecting link between youth, county government and local government. Real effect of the councils on policy processes is unclear.

### **Municipal youth councils**

In 2014, 70 youth councils were active on municipal level. The number has increased gradually. The goal and functions of municipal-level youth councils is similar with county level youth councils, the difference is that they operate at different administrative levels.

### **3.2.9 Youth NGOs**

This section names youth organisations, which are not members of the National Youth Council.

#### **Open Republic (Avatud Vabariik<sup>37</sup>)**

It is a non-political youth organisation, which was called into being in 1999 with an aim to increase youth participation in society through increased awareness of social issues as well as through increased participation in deliberations on various socio-political issues. It is the largest youth organisation, which has Russian language as the working language. The organisation denies its role as a sole forum of non-Estonian youth. It has more than 1500 individual members, most from Russian-speaking North-Eastern part of the country and Tallinn with half of its population Russian speaking.

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<sup>36</sup> <http://opilasliit.ee/> (in Estonian only)

<sup>37</sup> <http://or.ee/et/avaleht/> (in Estonian or Russian only)

**Boys Corps of Defense League and Girls Corps of Defense League** (Noored Kotkad<sup>38</sup>, Kodutütred<sup>39</sup>)

Youth organisations of Defense League are amongst organisations for children and young people with most numerous membership figures.

**Student corporations** and similar associations at universities; there are more than 20 such organisations.

### **3.3 National network(s) for knowledge on youth**

No permanent national network for knowledge on youth exists. This does not mean that there is no cooperation between different actors. Cooperation between researchers, policy makers and practitioners takes place but it is mainly project based.

There have been several attempts to set up such network but these attempts have proved unsuccessful. Reasons of the lack of success include:

- Lack of a common understanding of the role of such network and how it would fit into already existing structures and processes. Would it have a permanent role in the society or would it be serving *ad hoc* needs of social actors, including public administration organisations? Needs of actors relating to youth are being serviced by existing research and data collection organisations already, so that the question What would be the added value of the network? arises.
- Lack of a common understanding of what could or should be the focus of such network. Would it need to focus on youth work, on youth policy, on youth in general, on concrete youth issues, or on several aspects? Would it need to serve public sector or actors from all corners of society?
- Lack of a common understanding what would be the format of such network and who would be responsible for running its activities. Should it be project based enterprise or a permanent structure?
- Lack of resources available to finance research into youth work and youth policy.
- Lack of need as a range of organisations already cover the information and analysis needs of ministries, municipalities and other organisations. This list includes:
  - Statistics Estonia<sup>40</sup>, which gives a general overview of the situation of young people in society, using also Eurostat standards.
  - analysis departments at ministries which provide social statistics and social analysis for concrete ministries, thus going more deep into concrete policy areas.

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<sup>38</sup> <http://www.nooredkotkad.ee/> (in Estonian only)

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.kodutytar.ee/> (in Estonian only)

<sup>40</sup> [www.stat.ee](http://www.stat.ee)

- Universities, which carry out both academic and applied research projects.
- Other social analysis organisations which are subcontracted to carry out required research.

Altogether, there is little need and motivation for another organisation which would provide data and knowledge on young people.

- Mandatory outsourcing of research through the public procurement process does not allow building permanent networks between ministries and research institutions or between research institutions.
- Lack of serious and systematic interest in youth policy and youth work in universities and in other research institutions. There is no strong functioning research center which would focus on the themes of the field of youth.

**Estonian Youth Work Centre** is responsible for preparation of youth field yearbook, which is a research-based publication, and running the website [www.noorteseire.ee](http://www.noorteseire.ee), which contains statistics and information on young people in Estonia.

I have been involved in a range of research projects focusing on youth work and youth policy but not as an EKCYP correspondent; I have participated as a researcher and/or expert.

## 4 Legislation

Life and activities of children, young people, young adults and adults in relation to children, young people and young adults is regulated by a range of legislative acts.

1. **The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia**<sup>41</sup> stipulates that people will acquire:

- The right to vote in municipal elections at age 16,
- The right to vote in national elections and referenda at age 18,
- The right to be a candidate for Estonian Parliament Riigikogu at age 21,
- The right to be a candidate for the President of Estonia at age 40.

2. **General Part of the Civil Code Act**<sup>42</sup> According to Civil Code, a person will acquire:

- Restricted active legal capacity at age 7,
- Extension of restricted active legal capacity at age 15,
- Active legal capacity at age 18.

3. **Basic Schools and Upper Secondary School Act**<sup>43</sup>

The act stipulates that people have the duty to attend basic school from age 7 until attaining basic education or turning 17 years old.

Through the institution of basic and upper secondary school, young people are entitled to a range of services and specialists aimed to support their learning and personality development processes as well as to alleviate problems arising from their pool social background. Young people are entitled to apply for and receive the services from age 7 until they finish secondary education.

The students of a school constitute the student body. The student body of a school has the right to decide and independently organise the matters of student life in accordance with acts and legislation adopted based on acts. A student body has the right to elect a student council who represents the student body in school management board as well as outside school. Young people possess this right from age 7 until they finish secondary school.

4. **Vocational Educational Institutions Act**<sup>44</sup>

The act entitles young people to a range of services and specialists to support their learning and personality development processes

Pupils have the obligation to:

- 1) participate in studies by completing the curriculum and study assignments;
- 2) observe the obligations established by laws, the statutes and internal procedure rules of the school, the rules for organisation of studies and other legislation, and bear liability upon violation thereof.

The pupils and students of a school constitute the student body. Student bodies have the right to decide and manage independently, in accordance with law and legislation issued on the basis thereof, issues of student life based on the interests, needs, rights and obligations of students.

The highest collegial decision-making body of the school is the council, the function of which is to organise the activities and plan the development of the school. The council shall include representative of the student body

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<sup>41</sup> State Gazette 1992, 26, 349, The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/530102013003/consolide/current>, last visited 11.03.2016.

<sup>42</sup> State Gazette 2002, 35, 215, General Part of the Civil Code Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/530102013019/consolide/current>.

<sup>43</sup> State Gazette I 2010, 41, 240, Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/530102013042/consolide/current>.

<sup>44</sup> State Gazette I, 30.12.2015, 25, Vocational Educational Institutions Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/515012016003/consolide/current>.

Following from the constitution of the student body of vocational educational institutions, the obligations and rights stipulated by the act hold for young people from approximately age 15 until age 19.

Similar rights and obligations are stipulated by 5. **Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act**<sup>45</sup> and 6. **Universities Act**<sup>46</sup>. These laws cover a somewhat older age range the basic school and vocational school acts as people can enter into institutions of higher education only after having obtained secondary education.

**7. Private Schools Act**<sup>47</sup> does not stipulate the right to form student council and participate in school management. The act stipulates that students of private schools are entitled to concessions and benefits granted by the state and local authorities on the same grounds as students of state or municipal schools or universities in public law of the same type. Private school students are in the same age brackets as students of municipal and state schools.

**8. Hobby Schools Act**<sup>48</sup> stipulates that The board of trustees of a hobby school shall direct the activity of the hobby school and make proposals to the head of the hobby school and the manager of the school in matters related to the development, assets and budget of the hobby school. The members of the board of trustees are the representatives of the manager of the school and organisations supporting the hobby school, a representative of the school staff engaged in educational activities and of the students, and a representative of the student self-government body if it exists. A student has the right to form a student self-government body and participate in its activity. A student has also the right to examine the study programmes, the statutes and internal rules of a hobby school before commencing and during the studies at the hobby school, demand activities which are in compliance with the study programme for a hobby.

A student is required to observe the internal rules of the hobby school, maintain the assets at the disposal of the hobby school and perform other obligations provided by law and the statutes of the hobby school.

Age of the majority of hobby school students remains between 7-19 years, most of them are in the lower end of the range.

**9. Study Allowances and Study Loans Act**<sup>49</sup> entitles pupils and students to apply for a range of study allowances and study loan. The act does not specify lower and upper age of pupils and student eligible to study allowances and loan. However, it specifies conditions when a minor can apply for a study allowance as well as contains also doctoral allowance. Hence, the Act covers population from mid-teens to well above 30 years of age as the age of doctoral students often is beyond 30 years.

**10. Youth Work Act**<sup>50</sup> stipulates that young people aged 7-26 years of age are entitled to a range of services and have access to specialists – youth workers – which have the function

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<sup>45</sup> State Gazette I, 23.03.2015, 270, Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/525062015008/consolide/current>.

<sup>46</sup> State Gazette I, 23.03.2015, 282, Universities Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/501072015003/consolide/current>.

<sup>47</sup> State Gazette I, 31.12.2015, 17, Private Schools Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/508012016004/consolide/current>.

<sup>48</sup> State Gazette I 2007, 4, 19, Hobby Schools Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/501072015008/consolide/current>.

<sup>49</sup> State Gazette I 2003, 58, 387, Study Allowances and Study Loans Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/525082015005/consolide/current>.

<sup>50</sup> State Gazette 2010, 44, 262, Youth Work Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/515012016004/consolide/current>.

of supporting their personal development. The act also defines municipal youth council; once formed in a municipality, voice of the youth council needs be taken into account in municipal policy processes.

#### 11. Family Law Act<sup>51</sup> stipulates that:

- Child's opinion is to be taken into account in the process of adoption and in other family matters, starting from age 10.
- A child who is at least 14 years of age may give consent for acknowledgment of paternity in person with the consent of his or her legal representative.
- A person acquires the right to get married when court gives a permission at age 15.
- A person acquires the right to get married at age 18.
- A person acquires the right to adopt a child when court gives a permission at age 18.
- A person acquires the right to adopt a child at age 25.
- A child under 18 years of age and an adult child under 21 years of age who continues full-time education is entitled to receive financial support from parents and/or grandparents.

The Family Law Act covers the age group 10 to 25 year olds.

**12. State Family Benefits Act<sup>52</sup>** stipulates that every child has the right to receive a child allowance from birth until he or she attains 16 years of age. A child who is enrolled in a basic school, upper secondary school, or vocational school that operates on the basis of basic education or who is without basic education and is enrolled in a vocational educational institution has the right to receive a child allowance until he or she attains 19 years of age. Hence, this act covers age group 0-18 year olds, and breaches also 19 year olds.

#### 13. Commercial code<sup>53</sup>

A member of the management board must be a natural person with active legal capacity – that means that the person at must be least 18 years old.

#### 14. Non-Profit Associations Act<sup>54</sup>

If a minor of at least 15 years of age becomes a member of such youth association which complies with the provisions of the Youth Work Act, the consent of the guardian need not be submitted to the non-profit association unless otherwise provided by the articles of association.

The Non-Profit Associations Act determines that children and minors under 18 year of age can be members of a non-profit association, but they cannot be members of the management board of a non-profit association, as the latter requires active legal capacity

**15. Child Protection Act<sup>55</sup>** defines the age brackets of a child – a child is a human being below the age of 18 years. The act defines a range of rights and services that a child is entitled to enjoy.

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<sup>51</sup> State Gazette I 2009, 60, 395, Family Law Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/523122015009/consolide/current>.

<sup>52</sup> State Gazette I, 22.12.2013, 72, State Family Benefits Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/514012014002/consolide/current>.

<sup>53</sup> State Gazette I 1995, 26, 355, Commercial code, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/504042014002/consolide/current>.

<sup>54</sup> State Gazette I 1996, 42, 811, Non-Profit Associations Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/510042014003/consolide>.

<sup>55</sup> State Gazette I, 06.12.2014, 1, Child Protection Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/506052015001/consolide>.

As a restriction to minors, the act stipulates that it is prohibited for a minor under 16 years of age to be in a public place from 23.00 to 06.00 without being accompanied by an adult. During the period from 1 June to 31 August, it is prohibited for a minor to be in a public place from 00.00 to 05.00 without being accompanied by an adult.

#### **16. Military Service Act<sup>56</sup>**

A person liable to national defense obligation is:

- a call-up selectee;
- a male person between the ages of 18 and 60 years of age.

A call-up selectee is a male person between the ages of 17 and 27 (inclusive) until entering conscript service or alternative service or until release from conscript service or alternative service.

#### **17. Penal Code<sup>57</sup>**

A person is capable of guilt if, at the time of commission of the act, he or she is mentally capable and at least 14 years of age.

Taking into account the level of the moral and mental development of a person of 14 to 18 years of age and his or her ability to understand the unlawfulness of his or her act or to act according to such understanding, the court may release the person from punishment and impose other sanctions on him or her.

The Penal Code foresees punishments for engagement in sexual intercourse with a person of less than 14 years of age, with a person of less than 18 years of age under certain circumstances, buying sex from minors, engagement in pornographic works.

Under certain circumstances, a court may release on parole an offender who was younger than eighteen years of age at the time of commission of the criminal offence.

Illegal provision of small quantities of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances to a person of less than eighteen years of age is punishable.

Inducement of a person of less than eighteen years of age by an adult person to consume alcohol is punishable.

Systematic selling or buying of alcohol to a person of less than eighteen years of age by an adult person is punishable

Provision of employment by an employer in Estonia for a minor alien staying in Estonia without legal basis is punishable.

Hence, the Penal Code sees a difference between age ranges less than 14 years, 14-18 years and above 18 years of age, prohibiting certain acts and activities for and in connection with young people less than 18 years of age.

#### **18. Code of Criminal Procedure<sup>58</sup>**

The code makes a difference between children and young people in age groups below 10 years, below 14 years and minors, that is young people below 18 years of age. The difference is obvious in a range of paragraphs concerning carrying out procedures in court and other situations related to investigation of a crime.

#### **19. Code of Civil Procedure<sup>59</sup>**

The code makes a difference between minors and adults. Among minors, the code makes a different between the group young than 14 years of age and the group 14-18 year olds.

<sup>56</sup> State Gazette I, 10.07.2012, 1, Military Service Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/519092014003/consolide/current>.

<sup>57</sup> State Gazette I 2001, 61, 364, Penal Code, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/523122015005/consolide/current>.

<sup>58</sup> State Gazette I 2003, 27, 166, Code of Criminal Procedure, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/530102013093/consolide/current>.

<sup>59</sup> State Gazette I 2005, 26, 197, Code of Civil Procedure, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/513122013001/consolide/current>.

## 20. Imprisonment Act<sup>60</sup>

The Act stipulates that young prisoners shall be segregated in juvenile prisons and juvenile wards:

- less than 15 years of age,
- 15-16 years,
- 16-18 years of age,
- 18-21 years of age.

In the case of minors, there is a shorter period of storage and archiving of data entered in prisoners' register.

It is prohibited to use firearms against women and minors, except in the case where a woman or minor escapes, uses firearms to initiate resistance against a prison service officer or attacks a prison service officer or other people.

Minors can be put into a punishment cell for a limited period of time.

A person in custody who is a minor and who has been in custody pending trial for at least one month shall be allowed to continue to acquire basic education or general secondary education.

All specifications for the work of minors arising from labour protection laws.

The act identifies approximately a 10-year long period in one's life, from early teens to early twenties.

## 21. Traffic Act<sup>61</sup>

A person may acquire a right to drive a moped at age 14, a light motorcycle and a light four-wheel vehicle at age 16, an ordinary passenger car and similar vehicles at age 18, a motorcycle at age 20, powerful three-wheeled motorcycles, small buses at age 21, heavy vehicles and buses at age 24. Limited right to drive a passenger car may be acquired at age 16, driving lessons can start at age 14.

An authorised official must be at least 18 years of age and must have undergone training in accordance with the established procedure. By way of exception, an authorised official controlling parking in a car park may be at least 16 years of age

On the proposal of the management of an organisation representing Estonia in the International Automobile Association, the right to drive power-driven vehicles of category B may be granted to a motor racing athlete who is 17 years of age

## 22. Employment Contracts Act<sup>62</sup>

The act differentiates between the following categories of children:

- below 7 years of age,
- 7-12 years of age,
- 13-14 years of age,
- 15-16 years of age,
- 17 years of age.

In general, the range of activities a minor can be employed for is narrower and the working time is shorter for younger children, both grow with age.

In addition, the act stipulates that parent of children aged 14 years or less are entitled to additional days of leave, and in the year the child turns 3, 14 and 18 year of age, child leave is granted.

## 23. Labor Market Services and Benefits Act<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> State Gazette I 2000, 58, 376, Imprisonment Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/504112013005/consolide/current>.

<sup>61</sup> State Gazette I 2010, 44, 261, Traffic Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/516022016004/consolide>.

<sup>62</sup> State Gazette I 2009, 5, 35, Employment Contracts Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/530102013061/consolide/current>.





Pregnant women whose pregnancy has been identified by a doctor or a midwife for whom social tax is not paid are considered to be equal to insured persons.

## **28. Social Welfare Act<sup>68</sup>**

The act differentiates between persons younger than 14 years of age, 15 and 16 years old, and minors in general.

**29. Local Government Organisation Act<sup>69</sup>** stipulates that the functions of a local authority include the organisation, in the rural municipality or city, of social services and benefits and other social assistance, welfare services for the elderly, youth work, housing and utilities, the supply of water and sewerage, the provision of public services and amenities, waste management, spatial planning, public transportation within the rural municipality or city, and the construction and maintenance of rural municipality roads and city streets unless such functions are assigned by law to other persons.

All those functions are relevant for young people, although the act itself does not set age limits.

As one can see, there is a multitude of legislative acts which carry relevance for defining youth and young people. In the acts, one finds no unified, single definition of youth and young people.

Similar picture – that there is no unified understanding of youth – occurred in the interviews with ministerial officials and other experts. Conceptually, however, most understandings built either on the idea that youth is a preparatory phase for “real life” (acquiring education and learning social and self-management necessary skills, developing good health and habits, etc) or on the idea that youth is a transition period from dependency to independence, from parents’ home to autonomy.<sup>70</sup>

Based on the review of the acts, one can conclude that they make a difference between the following age groups:

- children from age 0 until approximately 10 years of age,
- children and young people from age 10 until mid-teens,
- children and young people from mid-teens until the age of majority approximately (18),
- young adults / emerging adulthood, from age 18 until early and mid-twenties,
- young adults / emerging adulthood, onward from mid-twenties.

Majority of youth and young people remains in the brackets from approximately 10 years of age to early and mid-twenties. Splitting the youth into different sub-ranges of age is highly relevant in the context of establishing the link between youth and public policy.

## **Regional and local legislation on youth**

There is no separate regional or local legislation on youth as Estonia is a unitary state.

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<sup>68</sup> State Gazette I, 30.12.2015, 5, Social Welfare Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/504042016001/consolide>.

<sup>69</sup> State Gazette I 1993, 37, 558, Local Government Organisation Act, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/509012014003/consolide/current>.

<sup>70</sup> Interviews with officials of Ministry of Education and Research on 01.04.2016, Estonian Youth Work Centre on 08.03.2016, Ministry of Justice on 04.03.2016, Ministry of Social Affairs on 08.03.2016, Ministry of Interior on 28.03.2016, representatives of Estonian Youth Council on 02.03.2016, Tartu City Government on 02.04.2016, Erasmus+ Youth in Action national agency / foundation Archimedes on 07.03.2016, Tallinn University on 21.03.2016.



## **5 National Policy Programmes on youth**

This section lists and briefly describes ministerial programs that have relatively high relevance for young people; the programs are being implemented in 2016. The programmes, in Estonian only, are available at the homepage of the Government of Estonia<sup>71</sup>.

### **The Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 (Ministry of Education and Research)**

This document outlines strategic goals in the field of youth. The main goal worded out in the development plan is to provide young people with development and self-realization opportunities, which would support socially coherent and creative society in general.

### **Child and Family Development Plan 2012-2020 (Ministry of Social Affairs)**

The development plan outlines goals and measures that are directed to increasing wellbeing of families and children. As such, the development plan defines measures targeted to children and families as a single integrated policy field.

### **Principles for Developing the Field of Sports until 2030 (Ministry of Culture)**

The document outlines principles for engaging young people in sports and in physical education and supporting social integration through this.

### **National Integration Development Plan “Integrating Estonia 2020” (Ministry of Culture)**

Civil Society Development Plan 2015-2020 (Ministry of the Interior)

The development plan foresees measures to increase civic activism of young people

### **Estonian Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2020 (Ministry of Education and Research)**

The strategy outlines goals and measures in the field of education. These are driven by changes in the worlds of work and education and by the need to assure commensurability of the two spheres.

### **Smart and Active People 2013-2016 (Ministry of Education and Research)**

This document is not a governmental development plan but a yearly updated overview of the situation of education in the country, which also serves as an input document to the lifelong learning strategy.

### **National Population Health Development Plan 2009–2020 (Ministry of Social Affairs)**

The health development plan aims to increase the number of years lived free of disease by 2020 for men to 60 years and for women to 65 years; it also aims to increase lifespan for men to 75 years and for women to 84 years.

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<sup>71</sup> <https://valitsus.ee/et/eesmargid-tegevused/arengukavad>

### **Internal Security Development Plan 2015–2020 (Ministry of the Interior)**

### **Violence Prevention Strategy 2015–2020 (Ministry of Justice)**

The Internal Security Development Plan and the Violence Prevention Strategy have prevention of misbehavior and juvenile delinquency as one of its objectives.

### **Development Directions for Criminal Prevention Policy until 2018 (Ministry of Justice)**

The document outlines the following main goals in this field:

- reducing recidivism and
- prevention of minors' criminal activity.

## 6 Budget / Public expenditure allocated to youth

Establishing the total sum of activities addressing young people would be a highly complex task because the activities are carried out by a range of ministries, other public organisations, municipalities, also by not-for-profit and for-profit organisations which are subcontracted to carry out certain activities. The activities are financed from different local, national, international sources. There is no overall overview of all cost items spent on young people from public purse through various social policy measures and the task of establishing this figure goes beyond the scope of the country sheet.

For 2016, the following sums have been allocated to the [Youth Affairs Department at Ministry of Education and Research](#) and to [Estonian Youth Work Centre](#) (including external funds):

- Budgetary Allocations supporting research in the youth field: 0,12 million euros;
- evaluation of the impact of activities targeting vulnerable young people: 0,18 million euros;
- the entire budget of the Youth Affairs Department (8 million euros) and Estonian Youth Work Centre (5 million euros): 13 million euros.<sup>72</sup>

The budget of the Youth Field Development Plan for years 2014 to 2017 is given in the table below.

**Table 5. Budget for implementation of the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2017**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Increased opportunities to develop creativity, personality and civic activism.	7 293 059	7 160 026	5 992 188	6 544 254	26 989 527
Decreased threat to be socially excluded, increased labor market competitiveness and support to social inclusion.	4 755 263	6 721 001	7 928 598	7 080 480	26 485 341
Increased support to	917 188	917 188	917 188	917 188	3 668 752

<sup>72</sup> Youthwiki, youth policy draft report

youth participation in communities and in decision-making in general.					
Increased effectiveness of the field of youth. Support to development of youth policy and youth work.	1 634 223	1 507 625	1 498 517	1 377 577	6 017 942
Total	14 599 733	16 305 840	16 336 491	15 919 499	63 161 562

Source: Ministry of Education and Research

### **Financing of the youth work, national level**

The youth work is financed from the local government budget according to the priorities approved in the development plan of the municipality and tasks and activities related thereto. Usually the local government finances local youth programmes and projects, such as youth camps, sports events and hobby activities of the schools, and supports youth associations. Open calls will be carried out or contracts will be signed with the promoters of the activities. A local government often also maintains hobby schools (music, sports, art, nature, etc.) and youth centers, funding the management costs of buildings and personnel costs as well as the participation of youth in the activities. However, there is no detailed overview of municipal spendings on youth work.

Activities pursuing wider national impact in the youth work are financed from the state budget. Some of these funds are allocated through county governments, e.g. grants for juvenile committees, youth information centers and open youth centers.

Annual grants from state budget are allocated to the youth associations that involve at least 500 members and run high-quality activities at least in 5 counties and youth work associations that represent larger sectoral stakeholders.

A separate program has also been created to support youth councils. Small-scale initiatives and projects are financed through the calls for proposals of the Council of Gambling Tax.

The Estonian National Agency for the Erasmus+ Programme of the Archimedes Foundation implements the Erasmus+ program using the funds of the European Union. New

development programs of youth affairs are planned for 2014-2020 on account of the funds of the European Social Fund.

The Children and Youth at Risk, which is the EEA Grants support program, improves the situation of youth of up to 26 years of age. The program is implemented by the Estonian Youth Work Centre.

### **Regional level**

There is no separate budget for youth policy at regional level.



## **7 European Dimension of youth policy**

European strategies, policy commitments and programs in the youth field are implemented through Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020, Erasmus+ Youth activities and programs which are financed by EEA countries.

### **7.1 Council of Europe.**

At national level, Estonia has been taking part in several Council of Europe activities in the field of youth.

Estonia has been participating in “No Hate Speech” campaign although national campaign committee has not been established yet.

Estonia participates in the youth centers’ quality management with an aim to obtain the quality sign for the Kloogaranna youth camp.

Estonia also participates in other Council of Europe activities which CDEJ foresees to be carried out.

Estonia annually contributes its share to the European Youth Foundation.

### **7.2 European Union**

#### **7.2.1 Implementation of the Youth in Action program**

The former Youth in Action, which is now part of Erasmus+, is implemented by the same institution and the same subunit of the institution, which implemented the Youth in Action program before 2014. The name of the organisation changed from Youth in Action National Agency to Archimedes Foundation Youth Agency at the beginning of 2015.

Tasks and organisational structure of the unit remained the same; also, the unit is part of the same organisation to which it belonged before the change of name – Archimedes Foundation. Archimedes Foundation is an independent body established by the Estonian government with the objective to coordinate and implement different international and national programs and projects in the field of training, education and research.<sup>73</sup>

#### **European action in the field of youth information (national website of Eurodesk)**

European youth information portal Eurodesk is implemented by Erasmus+ Youth in Action national agency. Information for young people is available at their webpage<sup>74</sup>. Topics covered include information on trainings and educational events, travel, financial support and grants to participate in various events.

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<sup>73</sup> [www.archimedes.ee](http://www.archimedes.ee)

<sup>74</sup> <http://euroopa.noored.ee/>

Information for young people is available also via Youth Information Portal<sup>75</sup>. The portal covers diverse fields of youth information, including:

- An overview of local youth information centers,
- Youth activism,
- Becoming independent,
- Studying, including formal education system, non-formal learning, studies abroad,
- Working, including an overview of labor market services, volunteering, entrepreneurship, training,
- Nature and environment,
- Health,
- Europe,
- Citizen and society.

The portal integrates local, national and European level information relevant for young people.

### **7.3 Follow-up of the EU Youth Strategy (2010 – 2018) on the national level**

In 2013, the Youth Field Development Plan was adopted for the period 2014-2020. The plan integrates the main values and objectives of the EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018 in its goals and measures for obtaining the goals. For example, the two outcome indicators of the Youth Field Development Plan relate to reducing school dropout rate and reducing youth unemployment rate. The Development Plan sees supporting youth participation and personal development among its main goals. Also, the plan contains an objective of strengthening the youth field in general which is also in line with the objective of strengthening youth field at European level.

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<sup>75</sup> <http://www.noorteportaal.ee/est/english/>

## **8 Further sources of information on youth policy in Estonia**

Ministry of Education and Research <https://www.hm.ee/en/activities/youth>

Estonian Youth Work Centre <https://www.entk.ee/eng>

Youth monitor <http://www.noorteseire.ee/en/about-youth-monitor/structure-of-youth-monitoring>

Statistics Estonia, [www.stat.ee](http://www.stat.ee)