



Estonia – ANED country profile

The information contained in this summary was compiled by the Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED) in April 2009.

Academic networks and resources

While there is no specific academic network on disability research in Estonia, the [Estonian Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics](#) has promoted research on social inclusion of the elderly, among them disabled people.

Policy and enforcement bodies

The key national bodies with responsibility for disability law and policy implementation include:

The [Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia](#) is responsible for developing strategy for disabled persons and ensuring resources at the state level.

[Local governments](#) are responsible for provision of social welfare services to the disabled persons.

The [Social Insurance Board](#) is responsible for the organization and co-ordination of grants and payments of state pensions, benefits and compensations through local offices

The [Chancellor of Justice](#) resolves discrimination disputes which arise between persons in private law on the basis of the Constitution and other laws. The Chancellor of Justice is responsible for the application of the principle of equality and equal treatment.

Organisations of disabled people

The national organisation representing disabled people at the European level (European Disability Forum) is:

The [Estonian Chamber of Disabled People](#) includes 49 member organisations.

Other significant national organisations of disabled people include:

The [Estonian Union of Persons with Mobility Impairment](#)

The [Estonian Federation of the Blind](#)

The [Estonian Association of Deaf](#)

The [Estonian Mentally Disabled People Organisation](#)

In 2003 these five organisations formed the [Forum](#), which is the organisation that liaises with the Ministry of Social Affairs and coordinates the problems of disabled persons. The protocols of their decisions are available on their web-site.

National law and strategy

Estonia has signed the [United Nations Convention](#) but not the [Optional Protocol](#).

Important national laws, policies and strategies concerning disabled people include:

[Social Benefits for Disabled Persons Act](#) (1999, last revision 01.03.2009). The purpose of the act is to support the social integration, education and working of persons with disabilities through partial compensation for the additional expenses caused by disability. The act establishes benefit allowances for disabled children, disabled people of working age, disabled older persons and allowances for education, rehabilitation, working, in-service training etc. From 2008 working-age and old-age people with disabilities have been seen as different groups with different associated policy aims and measures.

[Labour Market Services and Benefits Act](#) (2006). Under this Act counselling, training, adjustment of workplaces and equipment and free use of technical aids needed for work are available to registered unemployed people. Disabled job seekers (including disabled people at work) receive services under the framework program through the Labour Market Board.

[Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) (1999, last revision in 2007). Under this Act, an employer is required to enable a worker who has become partially incapacitated for work in the employer's enterprise (as a result of an occupational accident or occupational disease) to continue work suitable for him or her in the enterprise. Job duties, work equipment and the workplace should be adapted to his or her physical and mental abilities.

The [Multilingual Glossary of the European Union](#) provides details of national legislation in English.

[Strategy for Social Protection and Social Inclusion](#) is monitored by biannual national reports

[Development Plan of Ministry of Social Affairs for 2009-2012](#) sets key principles to be followed.

There is no direct legislation outlawing discrimination in the provision of goods and services. ([MeAC, 2007](#))

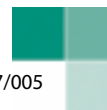
Facts and figures

Data on population indicate that:

According to [2000 Census](#) data, over 102 000 people in Estonia were disabled; 7,8% of the population. The census question used the official definition of impairment. For that reason the census data does not differ to a great extent from the official registration of the disabled by the [Social Insurance Board](#) who registered disabled persons in 2007: 115,354 or 8.6% of the population.

Of the disabled population, over 43%, have mobility impairments, those with mental disorder comprise 18.6%, with hearing impairment 2.3%, with visual impairment, 3.5% and with other impairments over 31%.

In 2007, among the working age population who were permanently incapacitated and who had lost at least 40% of their capacity to work, comprised 74576 persons or



5,6%. Of these, people with mobility impairment formed over 43% and those with mental disorder comprised 18,6%

([Health, Labour and Social Sector in 2007](#). Tallinn, Ministry of Social Affairs, 2008, 111pp.)

According to [Estonian Health Interview Survey 2006](#), 11.3% of disabled people had been severely restricted in their everyday activities because of their health conditions for the last 6 months.

Data on employment indicate that:

According to [Labour Force Survey](#) (2008) the overall labour force participation rate was 73% for males and 66.3% for females (total 69.5%).

Among the age group 15-64 participating in labour force, 5.8% had activity limitations because of long-term illness. Of these, the labour force participation rate was 33.3% and compared to 2006 had increased by 2%. For the population with significant activity limitations the labour force participation rate had not increased between the two years and comprised 12.5%. For the population who were somewhat limited in their activities the participation rate had reduced by 4% to 51.5%.

At the beginning of 2007, 65,497 people were registered with the Social Insurance Board for their loss of capacity of work. 48% were assessed as having an impairment of 40-70%. 37,4% of those incapacitated to work were employed at the beginning of 2007. ([Sotsiaalvaskonna arengud 2000-2006](#). Tallinn, Ministry of Social Affairs, 2008, 144 pp.)

Data on education indicate that:

According to the [2000 Census](#) the proportion of those at least with ISCED 3 level among the disabled population formed 45.7% and comprised less than the average in the population (59%). However, the proportion of those with higher education (ISCED 5 level) among the disabled people comprised 16.2%, which is higher than the average in the population.

According to the [Estonian Health Interview Survey 2006](#), among those severely restricted in their everyday activities at least for last 6 months, the proportion with at least secondary education (ISCED 3+) formed more than 73% (compared with an average 80% for the total population). Those with severe activity limitations had a higher education level of 25,5% (average 33% for the total population).

Since 2000, disabled students may apply for allowance for education if they are not working and if they have obtained the basic education (ISCED level 2). In 2006 19 persons received such an allowance. There are no age restrictions on the allowance. The allowance is paid upon receipt of confirmation of expenditures incurred in obtaining the education.

Data on accessibility indicate that:

The [MeAC e-accessibility survey results for Estonia in 2007](#) showed that:



None of the selected public or sectoral/commercial websites passed even the automatic evaluation.

The main emergency telephone number was not accessible by text.

Neither of the two main mobile telephone operators, or landline operators, provided e-accessibility information via their website.

In 2006, the public TV channel in Estonia provided some national language programs with subtitling and some programs with signing (but not more than 1% of total volume). Only one daily news program was broadcast with signing. Neither of the two main commercial TV channels, in 2006, provided any national language programs with subtitling, signing or description.

Of the two main retail banks, neither had installed talking ATMs

In general, in this aspect Estonia falls into the general picture of Europe, where the minority of countries have had some improvement in eAccessibility lately and Europe in terms of both eAccessibility status and eAccessibility policy, compares very unfavourably with that of their peers in the comparison countries examined in the MeAC study (AU, CA and US). Estonia belongs to this part of one third of European countries who provide in **main public broadcasters subtitling** for deaf people, however, the amount of subtitling being still negligible..

Data on poverty and incomes indicate that:

In 2007, those in the lowest income quintile, with bad or very bad health, comprised 27,5% of children up to 16, 17,1% of people aged 16-64 years and 47,4 % of people aged 65 and older . Compared to previous years the proportion of children in the lowest quintile has increased and the other groups have somewhat decreased or remained at the same level. ([Statistics Estonia, 2007](#))

The average pension for being incapacitated from work was EEK 1,842 in 2007, which is barely 60% of the average pension. The average pension comprises around 40% of the average income. In 2006 disabled persons received benefits of EEK 2,218 each. ([Sotsiaalvaskonna arengud 2000-2006](#). Tallinn, Ministry of Social Affairs, 2008, 144 pp) [http://213.184.49.171/www/gpweb_est_gr.nsf/HtmlPages/Trendid2007-mai/\\$file/Trendid2007-mai.pdf](http://213.184.49.171/www/gpweb_est_gr.nsf/HtmlPages/Trendid2007-mai/$file/Trendid2007-mai.pdf)

In January 2008, the number of people receiving an incapacity for work pension was 67,459 (at an average of EEK 2,241), of which the large majority were receiving pensions at the higher rates for people with 80-100% incapacity ([The number of pensioners by groups 2001-2008](#)).

Data on attitudes indicate that:

[Lagerspetz, et al](#) (2007) report that:

Generally, disabled people experience less or a different kind of discrimination from family members of disabled people or the population without any impairments. The low employment rate among disabled people reduces the probability of being discriminated against in the work place. This also applies to the sphere of education.



In the sphere of services people with or without impairments experience discrimination to a similar extent. Only in the sphere of medical services do disabled people encounter greater inequality .

People with disability encounter more inequality in their neighbourhoods if they are older or with evident physical impairments. Usually disabled people do not know who to turn to for improving the situation

Data on public spending indicate that:

The main source for comparative assessment of expenditures on social care is through ESSPROS. However, the current methodology does not distinguish between total population and disabled population in order to distinguish the proportions of public social expenditure spent on specific population categories (Total expenditure on social protection in 2006 in current prices formed 12,4% <http://www.stat.ee/29942>)

Social benefits for disabled persons in 2006 comprised 185 PPS per head and 1.2 % of GDP

In 2007, the Ministry of Social Affairs paid EEK 9.84 million in social benefits to disabled people, of which: 2.23 million to people with 'profound' disability; 6.72 million with 'severe' disability; 0.58 million with 'moderate' disability; 0.31 for undefined impairment ([Social support for people with disabilities 2005-2007](#))

http://213.184.49.171/www/gpweb_est_gr.nsf/HtmlPages/01_Sotsiaaltoetus_puude_ga_inimestele_2005

Public expenditure on care for elderly people is declining. It formed 0,076% of GDP in 2006, compared with 0.093% in 2003 and 0.136% in 2000 ([Eurostat](#))

In 2006, the state spent EEK 57,827 on rehabilitation and technical aids costing EEK 80,997 ([Technical aids 2001-2007](#)).

Social protection

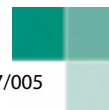
Key features of the national system include (including adapted items from the [MISSOC](#) database December 2008):

Disability benefits

Different allowances are available to disabled people of working age, pensionable age, child allowance, carers and disabled parents ([Social benefits for disabled persons](#), see also [Pensions and benefits](#)).

A pension is paid for Incapacity for Work (töövõimetuspension). Social Tax (sotsiaalmaks) contributions are made by employers, self-employed people and the State. Pension supplements (pensionilisad) and National Pension (rahvapension) payments and taxes also fund welfare payments.

In 2006, 5,295 disabled children were entitled to benefits and among adult population 107,431 persons were entitled to disability benefit. In 2005 the benefit for long-term care of the adult population became the responsibility of local



governments .(Mari Kreitzberg. Social benefits of disabled people (in, Ülla Mäe (ed). [Sotsiaalvaldkonna arengud 2000-2006](#). Tallinn, Ministry of Social Affairs, 2007).

The state provides long-term care benefits for children if their carer is not working. In 2006 there were 1,837 persons who were entitled for the monthly long-term care allowance for children aged 3-18.

Rehabilitation and re-training

In 2005, there were 41 rehabilitation agencies in 14 counties (all except Hiiumaa). ([Rehabilitation services for disabled people 2004-5](#)).

In 2007, 42,884 people were receiving orthopaedic devices, the majority of them elderly people ([Technical aids 2001-2007](#))

[Rehabilitation services in Estonia](#) are available to children and adults based on a personal rehabilitation plan, which may include support from therapists, psychologists, social workers, and special education.

In 2001, an allowance for rehabilitation for disabled persons aged 16-65 was established. The Social Insurance Board pays the rehabilitative care service provider after expenditure has been incurred. In 2006, 2,274 disabled persons received this allowance.

In 2001 a re-training allowance was also established. In 2006, 51 persons got the allowance, which is paid after the expenditure has been incurred and the person is working. Compensation is EEK 9600 over 3 years.

Preferential employment and quotas

There is no employment quota system in Estonia

Long-term support and care

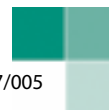
In 2007 there were 27 mental health agencies providing care to 4,398 service users ([Service agencies in counties, and Service users by sex and age, 1998-2007](#)).

In 2007, 6,428 people were receiving home care services, of which 4,863 were women, and 5,274 were over the age of 65 ([Service users by sex and age 1998-2007](#))

The number of people who have been appointed with a guardian has declined slightly, from 22,831 in 2005 to 22,289 in 2007 (of which the large majority are aged over 65, and women) ([Care taking on the basis of sex and age 2005-2007](#)).

Long term care is provided through institutional care, home care, day care facilities and benefits for long-term care for the carer. In 2006 there were 4,737 older and disabled persons in long-term care institutions. 40% of them were older than 80 years. 22,600 persons used home care services in 2006. Among the recipients of home care services 73% were over 65. Of those registered as disabled with Social Insurance Board, around 20% received home care services.

In 2006, day care services were provided for 66,000 persons; of these 20,000 used the facilities at least once a week. 75% of service recipients were 65 years and older.



Personal assistance is a new service established since 2005. In 2006 only 35 local governments, of more than 200, provided these services.

Special care services are available to adults who have developed a greater need for personal assistance, instruction and /or supervision due to severe or permanent mental disorder. [Regulation No 5](#) of the Minister of Social Affairs (January 9, 2008) specifies eligibility criteria.

Additional information

Useful sources of more detailed information about the situation of disabled people, and the policies and support available, include:

Further statistical data is available from the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#) ,which provides data on expenditure and service delivery