

EDUCATION,
LABOUR MARKET AND
CAREERS GUIDANCE
IN ESTONIA

Foundation Vocational Education
and Training Reform in Estonia
2001

ESTONIA IN BRIEF

Form of Government	parliamentary democracy
Capital	Tallinn, 408 329 inhabitants
Currency	the Estonian Kroon (EEK)
Neighbouring Countries	Finland and Sweden across the Baltic Sea; Russian Federation, Latvia
Surface Area	45 227 km ²
Population	1 439 197 (2000)
Population Density	31,9 inhabitants per km ²
Official Languages	Estonian
Religion	there is no state church, the largest church is Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, the next in size is Apostolic-Orthodox Church; only 16% of the population have formalised their ties to a specific congregation
Labour Force	705 100 (367 500 men, 337 700 women), of whom 96 500 (13,7%) are unemployed (2000)
Employment Sectors	service 59,3%, industry and construction 35,2%, agriculture and forestry 5,5% (2000)
Exports by Industries	agricultural industry 5,9%, mineral industry 2,5%, chemical industry 3,7%, wood industry 13,4%, textile industry 11,3%, metal and engineering industry 44,5%, other 18,7% (2000).
Main Trading Partners	Finland, Sweden, Germany, Latvia, Russia.
GNP/per Capita (1999)	3471 USD

ESTONIA IN BRIEF

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this brochure is to provide guidance counsellors with preliminary information about education, labour market and careers guidance issues in Estonia.

The opening part introduces initial Estonian contact points and public services for further information on any of the main themes. The following two chapters elaborate the topics of education and labour market in more detail, and are intended to cast light on the most relevant aspects for guidance practitioners as approached from the international point of view.

Although the history of careers guidance in Estonia goes back over 70 years, the significance attached to this field has not been consistently prominent nor its development stable. After recurrent destructions and constructions of the guidance and counselling structures at different times, Estonia is once again experiencing the phase where the construction of a new system is still under way. For this reason, the main emphasis of the theme treatment in this brochure has been placed primarily on the process and changes of careers guidance services from the start of the 20th century to this day.

Addresses of related organisations are brought out in the closing chapter to enable all interested parties to contact them directly.

1. INFORMATION SOURCES FOR GUIDANCE PRACTITIONERS

1.1 INITIAL REFERENCE POINTS

EUROGUIDANCE ESTONIA – National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance

Foundation Vocational Education and Training Reform acts as the National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance in Estonia. The aim of the Foundation, established in 1996, is to assist Estonian socio-economic development in preparing for the EU integration, through the implementation of its programmes in the area of human resource development. The activities of the Foundation are supported by an extensive network of international and local partners, including VET institutions in Estonia and abroad, relevant ministries, local and regional governments, and employment organisations. The 12-member Steering Committee consists of the representatives of the named institutions.

The programmes implemented by the Foundation include: EU Phare Upgrading the Skills of the Work Force in Estonia, Estonian National Observatory, Leonardo da Vinci Programme, Estonian Business Education Programme, Euroguidance Estonia, Special Preparatory Programme for the European Social Fund.

Euroguidance Estonia, established in 1998, contributes to the promotion of transnational mobility in education and training within the context of the Leonardo da Vinci programme in close collaboration with all the other Euroguidance Centres in Europe. The main target group on national level is the Estonian network of guidance counsellors for whom Euroguidance Esto-

nia operates as the reference point of various issues related to transnational mobility.

Foundation ARCHIMEDES

Foundation Archimedes was established in 1997 by the Ministry of Education to manage the EU education and research programmes. Its aim is to prepare Estonian education and research system as well as youth organisations for co-operation with the EU structures, also to reinforce Estonian participation in the EU and international education, research and youth programmes. These tasks include information provision, guidance and counselling, application processing, evaluation and dissemination of results.

EU programmes and networks Socrates (Erasmus, Comenius, Lingua, Minerva, Grundtvig, Arion, NARIC), Fifth Framework programme, ESIS and Estonian ENIC run under the Foundation Archimedes.

Foundation Archimedes works closely with the Ministry of Education and with institutions involved in the internationalisation of the education and research field, such as education establishments, research institutes, youth organisations etc.

1.2 PUBLIC SERVICES

Haridusministeerium (Ministry of Education)

The Ministry of Education is responsible for education policy and planning. Its sphere of responsibility includes general, vocational, adult and higher education, also research and youth policy, and youth work. Educational and research co-operation agreements with other countries, and the management of the Eurydice programme are likewise among the responsibilities of

the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education is assisted in its role by a number of management and consultative bodies with an administrative or teaching function:

- *Kõrghariduse Nõukoda* (Higher Education Advisory Chamber). A consultative body of representatives of higher education institutions at the Ministry of Education dealing with problems related to higher education.
- *Eesti Teadus- ja Arendusnõukogu* (Estonian Research and Development Council). A consultative body in the Government chaired by the Prime Minister.
- *Eesti Teadusfond* (Estonian Science Foundation). A consultative body of experts, representatives of the universities and of the Ministry of Education deciding on the financing of science projects.
- *Kõrghariduse Hindamise Nõukogu* (Higher Education Quality Assessment Council). A body responsible for the accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes.

***Sotsiaalministeerium* (Ministry of Social Affairs)**

The mission of the Ministry of Social Affairs is to create conditions in the society for shaping an environment that promotes good health, employment and social protection, and raises the quality of life of people.

The Ministry of Social Affairs develops and implements social, labour and health policy.

Several agencies work under the Ministry of Social Affairs, such as Estonian Labour Market Board, State Agency of Medicines, Estonian National Social

Insurance Board, Estonian National Health Protection Inspection, Estonian National Labour Inspection, Estonian Central Sickness Fund, Public Health and Social Training Centre, Estonian Centre for Health Education and Promotion, Estonian Social and Economic Council etc.

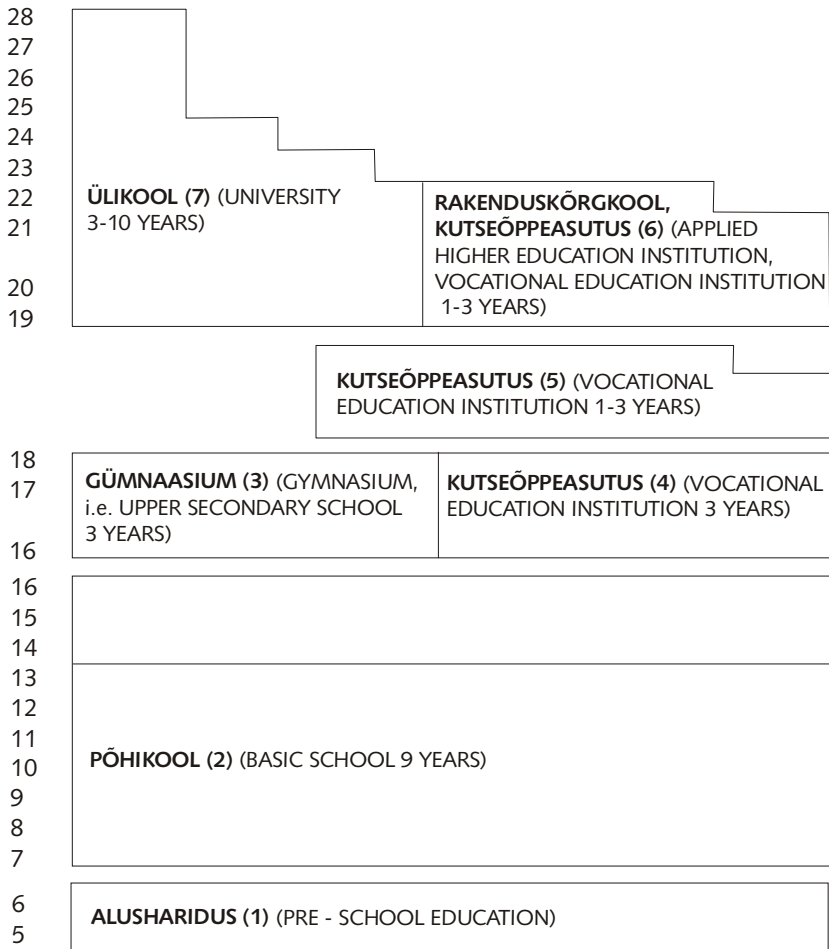
2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

The principal objective in the development of Estonian education system and policy is to advance Estonian society into an open learning society where every person and institution is a “lifelong learner”.

The Act on Education, adopted in 1992, states the following general goals of education: to promote the development of personality, family and the Estonian nation, as well as of national minorities, of Estonian economic, political and cultural life and of nature preservation in the global economic and cultural context; to educate loyal citizens; and to set up the prerequisites of life long learning for everybody. Several changes have been instituted regarding the structure of education as well as the content of study programmes at all levels of education.

Diagram of the formal education and training system, and the duration of different levels of education.



Key to diagram:

- (1) Pre-school education is provided at *Lasteaed* (kindergarten) or other childcare institutions. The role of these institutions is to support and complement the family's contribution in raising children by promoting their growth, development and individuality. The childcare institutions offer training until the age of seven years. Pre-school education is not part of the compulsory education.
- (2) *Põhikool* (basic school) – an institution providing compulsory nine-year basic education (grades 1 – 9).
- (3) *Gümnaasium* (gymnasium) – an institution providing general secondary education (grades 10 – 12). The national examinations at the end of gymnasium are the basis for continuing studies on a higher education level.
- (4), (5) and (6) *Kutseõppeasutus* (vocational education institution) – an institution providing vocational secondary education at upper-secondary and post-secondary level and vocational higher education.
- (6) *Rakendus kõrgkool* (applied higher education institution) and *Kutseõppeasutus* (vocational education institution) – institutions providing non-university type higher education or vocational higher education.
- (7) *Ülikool* – an institution of learning and research for the acquisition of academic degrees, i.e. *bakalaureus* (bachelor), *magister* (master), *doktor* (doctor). Universities also provide professional higher education programmes, in the form of *diplomiõpe* (diploma studies).

2.2 COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Põhiharidus (basic education)

The nine-year compulsory basic education starts at the beginning of a school year (grade 1) after children have reached the age of seven, and continues until they have satisfactorily completed basic school (grade 9), or have reached the age of seventeen.

The academic year lasts from September until June. The maximum number of lessons per week varies from 20 (grade 1) to 34 (grade 9). At the lower stage (grades 1– 4), pupils are taught by the class teacher, at the upper stage, by subject teachers.

The basic education aims at uniformity – the National Curriculum for the Basic Schools and Gymnasiums ensures equal opportunities for all children to transfer from one grade to the next, and from one school to another, when minimum requirements are met.

After satisfactory completion of basic education, pupils obtain *põhikooli lõputunnistus* (Basic School Graduation Certificate) and are entitled to continue their studies in gymnasiums or vocational education institutions.

2.3 GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Law on Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools (1993) establishes *gümnaasium* as the main structural unit of general secondary education, replacing the former *keskkool* (secondary school).

General secondary education lasts for three years (grades 10 – 12) for pupils aged sixteen to eighteen years.

The requirements concerning secondary education, i.e. the educational standards, are established in the National Curriculum for the Basic Schools and Gymnasiums. The national curriculum determines the study objectives, the duration of studies, the relationships of the national curriculum to the school electives, the list of compulsory subjects for selection, and graduation requirements. The authorised maximum weekly course workload at gymnasium is 35 lessons. Some subjects may be taught in more depth to some groups of students, which means that schools can develop their own approach or course content in such fields as mathematics, languages, business etc.

Since 1997, in order to complete general secondary education, the gymnasium students have to pass *riigieksamid* (national examinations), administered by *Riiklik Eksami- ja Kvalifikatsioonikeskus* (National Examination and Qualification Centre).

After completing general secondary education and passing three national examinations, pupils receive *gümnaasiumi lõputunnistus* (Secondary School Leaving Certificate) from the school, and *riigieksamitunnistus* (National Examination Certificate) from the National Examination and Qualification Centre. These two credentials are valid together and qualify the student for all types of higher education.

2.4 INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Vocational education and training can be acquired at two levels in Estonia: *kutsekeskharidus* (vocational secondary education) and *kutsekõrgharidus* (vocational higher education). The acquisition of vocational secondary education after basic school lasts for three years, after gymnasium the study length varies between one to 2,5 years. Vocational higher education (lasting for three to four years) is based on secondary education and is part of the higher education system.

Vocational secondary education

Approximately 26% of the basic school and gymnasium graduates continue their studies at a vocational school to acquire vocational secondary education.

In academic year 2000/1, there were 81 vocational education institutions with approximately 32,000 students in Estonia. Most of the schools provide programmes for both basic as well as general secondary education graduates (57 schools), the rest provide programmes only for general secondary education graduates (some of the latter also offer vocational higher education programmes). Since 1996, eight vocational training institutions have been merged and six new vocational education and training centres have been established.

The VET programmes are divided into 42 categories with 307 different specialisations. The following fields of study are of priority for development: information technology, electronics, telecommunication, services (tourism, catering, trading) and logistics.

Vocational higher education

See “Higher Education”

Vocational qualifications

The basis for the evaluation of a qualification level is not the completed programme but actual knowledge, skills, attitudes and proficiency. The qualification has to be measurable, the system of measuring has to be one and comparable, and motivate lifelong learning. An employer, in co-operation with an employee, evaluates vocational qualification level.

Currently, the graduation certificate of a vocational education institution does not confirm acquired vocational qualifications but states that the person has covered a certain study programme at a certain level. The situation is changing as the National Employee Qualification System is being developed.

Those who complete vocational secondary education programme after basic school, graduate with *tunnistus põhihariduse baasil kutsekeskhariduse omandamise kohta* (certificate on the acquisition of vocational secondary education on the basis of basic education). Those who complete the vocational secondary education after gymnasium, graduate with *tunnistus keskhariduse baasil kutsekeskhariduse omandamise kohta* (certificate on the acquisition of vocational secondary education on the basis of secondary education). Both certificates give access to the labour market and to the vocational higher education programmes. If the graduates wish to continue their studies at a university-type higher education institution, they need to pass national examinations and present the *riigjeksamitunnistus* (National Examination Certificate) as do the graduates from the gymnasiums.

Vocational higher education qualifications: see “Higher Education”.

2.5 HIGHER EDUCATION

2.5.1 Types of institutions

The Estonian higher education system is binary and consists of *ülikool* (university) and *rakenduskõrgkool* (applied higher education institution). Since 1999, there are some *kutseõppeasutus* (vocational education institutions) providing *kutsekõrgharidus* (vocational higher education) programmes according to the Vocational Education Institutions Act. All institutions offering higher education – regardless of their type – may be in state, public or private ownership. The administration of higher education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

Kõrgharidusstandard 2000 (Standard of Higher Education) specifies the requirements of higher education and is a fundamental act regulating the granting of education licenses and for accreditation of study programmes and education institutions.

University sector

A university is an institution of learning, culture and research in which a student may acquire the academic degrees of higher education. Some universities also provide professionally oriented *diplom*-study programmes, which do not lead to an academic degree. The broader objective of a university is to foster research and academic practices, and to guarantee and develop opportunities for obtaining higher education according to the Standard of Education.

University education comprises three stages – *bakalaureus*-, *magister*- and *doktor*-study.

Public universities are autonomous under the administrative jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. This autonomy gives universities the right to independently determine their academic and organisational structure, the content of teaching and research work, the organisation of teaching, the conditions for admission and graduation. There are six public universities in Estonia with the total number of students over 34,000 (academic year 1999/2000). Public universities are multidisciplinary, but only one is a type of classical university (*Tartu Ülikool*). Other five universities are more or less specialised in certain field(s) – agriculture (*Eesti Põllumajandusülikool*); engineering (*Tallinna Tehnikaülikool*); educational sciences (*Tallinna Pedagoogikaülikool*); arts (*Eesti Kunstiakadeemia*); music (*Eesti Muusikaakadeemia*).

Private university-type higher education institutions provide at least one *bakalaureus*-level study programme. They are financed from their own means but the state may participate in financing certain study programmes in the case of public demand for the qualifications that they provide. There are nine private universities with about 7,000 students in Estonia. The majority of private universities provide higher education in the field of business administration, law and international relations.

All universities and the study programmes are recognised by the state after quality assessment and accreditation.

Non-university sector

Non-university sector of higher education comprises *rakenduskõrgkool* (applied higher education institution) and *kutseõppeasutus* (vocational education institution) providing vocational higher education.

An applied higher education institution provides professionally oriented higher

education – *diplomiõpe* (diploma study). The institution may also offer vocational higher education programmes. Both programmes last for three to four years.

There are eight state-owned applied higher education institutions in Estonia, and they are financed from the state budget. All institutions of this type are specialised and offer higher education in the fields of engineering, teacher training, national defence, arts, music, transport, aviation etc.

Private applied higher education institutions must have a teaching licence issued by the Ministry of Education in order to carry out instruction at higher education level. In the academic year 2000/1, there were ten licensed private applied higher education institutions, in six of them at least one study programme was accredited and recognised by state. Private applied higher education institutions offer mainly programmes in the fields of business administration and theology.

Vocational higher education can be acquired in *kutseõppeasutus* (vocational education institution) or *rakenduskõrgkool* (applied higher education institutions). In the academic year 2000/1, seven public vocational education institutions provided vocational higher education in 20 different fields, mostly in the field of medicine (nursing, pharmacy, optometry, midwifery), social work and pedagogy (kindergarten teacher, music teacher). The nominal length of study is generally three to four years and includes practical training.

2.5.2 Qualifications

a) at universities

- *Bakalaureusekraad* – the first academic undergraduate degree awarded after *bakalaureus*-study. Its main purpose is to develop

theoretical knowledge and professional skills for the chosen area of employment and further study. Generally, the *bakalaureus*-level programmes at universities last for four years with total capacity of 160 credit points (240 ECTS credits). Study programmes in teacher training may last up to five years.

- *Magistrikraad* – a post-graduate degree awarded after one to two (mostly two) years of study. The main purpose of the *magister*-study is to deepen theoretical and specialist knowledge, and to develop proficiency in research.
- *Doktorikraad* – the highest academic degree. The length of study with defence of dissertation is four years after *magister*-level qualification.
- *Diplomas in Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Pharmacy, Stomatology and Architecture* – study programmes last for five to six years. The academic level of the diploma corresponds to the *magister*-level qualification and gives access to *doktor*-study.
- *Diplom*-study diploma – a qualification awarded after professionally oriented study, consists of the acquisition of practical knowledge and skills. The duration of study is three to four years, total capacity of studies being 120 – 160 credits points (180 – 240 ECTS credits).

b) at applied higher education institutions

- *Diplom*-study diploma – the same professionally oriented qualification as *diplom*-study diploma at the university.
- Higher vocational education diploma – the higher vocational education study programme includes practical training, which accounts for at least 35% of the total curriculum capacity. The study may have a common part with *diplom*-study.

c) **at vocational education institutions providing vocational higher education programmes**

- Vocational higher education diploma – the same qualification as offered by applied higher education institutions.

2.5.3 Foreign applicants

Academic requirements

It is up to the universities and other institutions of higher education to decide whether a foreign applicant meets the academic requirements for enrolment in a higher education course.

International students aiming at a degree from a higher education institution in Estonia must usually apply for admission on the same terms as Estonian students.

The general admission requirement for foreign applicants is at least the secondary school leaving certificate that is equivalent to the Estonian *gümnaasiumi lõputunnistus* or an equivalent recognised qualification attesting the completion of secondary school education. Applicants must be eligible for higher education in their own country.

There is a selection procedure for most higher education institutions and study programmes. The specific requirements depend on the particular higher education institution requirements and on the field of study. These may include a number of entrance examinations, an interview or consideration of the grades on State Examination Certificate and/or on Secondary School Leaving Certificate.

Admission to the study programmes is administrated by the higher education institution.

The deadline for handing in applications varies by higher education institutions, but it is usually the end of June or the beginning of July.

Applicants should contact directly and in due time the institution where they wish to study.

Visa and residence permit

All students admitted to an educational institution in Estonia must have a valid passport for the period of study. Citizens from a number of countries can enter Estonia visa-free. Others can obtain a visa from the nearest Estonian Consulate or Embassy.

In order to live and study in Estonia, students need a residence permit. To be issued one, applicants must submit the following documentation to the nearest Estonian Consulate or Embassy:

- an official letter of invitation from the host education institution
- an application for a residence permit
- passport and a copy of it
- 2 photos 4 x 5 cm
- proof of payment (receipt)
- proof of financial support during the study period

It may take up to three months to get a residence permit (usually about one month).

The citizens of the EU countries, USA, Switzerland, Iceland, Norway and Japan can apply for a residence permit in Estonia, others have to do it in the home country before departure. For more information, the nearest Estonian Embassy or Consulate should be contacted.

Work permit

Students who have received a residence permit for study in an education institution in Estonia, may work in Estonia but have to apply for a work permit at the Citizenship and Migration Board.

Further information about visas, residence and work permits can be obtained at the nearest Estonian Embassy, Consulate or Citizenship and Migration Board.

2.6 EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR PERSONS WITH PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HANDICAP

In Estonia, everybody has a right for education and training. Vocational Education Institutions Act stipulates the rights for education of students with special needs. There are special schools, classes and groups for students with special needs, integrated studies for all students are encouraged throughout the entire education system. The individual study-plans and changes in the regular common study-plan support those students who participate in vocational or professional training.

2.7 DISTANCE LEARNING

Distance education has a well-developed base and structure in Estonia. Through the Phare Multi-Country Programme for Distance Education two training centres were established in 1995. Since then, most universities have developed and are practising web-based courses both in formal as well as in continuing professional education. Public universities like the University of

Tartu, Tallinn Technical University, Tallinn Pedagogical University, as well as private universities Estonian Business School and Concordia International University Estonia have gained considerable experience in distance learning and teaching, and web-based courses are actively taught every year.

At most universities it is still possible in some fields to apply for distance learning in a traditional way – through correspondence courses.

2.8 LANGUAGE ISSUES FOR FOREIGNERS

The official language of instruction in Estonia is Estonian. Basic and secondary education can also be obtained in Russian.

At the higher education level, it is also possible to take courses in Russian, English or in other languages. The extent and number of international courses taught in English are growing rapidly, especially due to the intensive student exchange through the Erasmus programme. The international courses can form a component in programmes (for example Baltic Study Programmes at some universities) or be complete degree programmes for *magister*-level students.

Universities

Universities offer Estonian language courses for foreigners, which are usually meant for their own foreign students. Intensive Estonian language courses are provided during one or two semesters for students wishing to apply later to the faculty. In many cases it is also possible to take intensive language and culture courses during the summer – many universities organise such courses for their future exchange students. Everyone interested in the Estonian lan-

guage and culture is free to apply for them. The extent and level of instruction vary from beginners' courses to advanced programmes. Tuition fee for a 60 hours (ten days) course at the University of Tartu is 560 DEM, and for a 78 hours (thirteen days) course at Tallinn Pedagogical University is 700 DEM (summer 2001).

Within the Erasmus-scheme, Estonian language summer courses are organised for Erasmus exchange students. These courses are free of charge for prospective students.

Other organisations

Estonian courses for foreigners are also offered by various private institutions. They are open to all foreigners, the fees vary between organisations.

Estonian courses arranged abroad

There are several universities in the world where Estonian language, culture and history are taught at the academic level – the University of Toronto (Canada), the University of Turku, the University of Helsinki (Finland), the University of Uppsala, the University of Stockholm (Sweden), London University School of East European and Slavonic Studies (United Kingdom) etc.

2.9 EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

Estonia has currently over 900 private and voluntary associations in the adult education sector. Courses are offered in all parts of the country although the training providers tend to concentrate into bigger towns.

Formal education for adults is offered by the regular education system – in

gymnasiums, vocational education and higher education institutions, opportunities are provided to obtain general or vocational secondary education, higher education and/or academic degrees. Vocational and professional training is offered by vocational education institutions, training companies or by employers themselves.

Informal adult education is provided by various adult education institutions (mostly working as daytime folk high schools). Adults can study for various qualifications, participate in further education or take informal, self-development courses.

Local government can finance professional training. Continuing training and retraining of state officials, teachers and registered unemployed is likewise financed by the government. Adults themselves cover the tuition fees of the informal adult education, support can be obtained from the state or local authority funds.

Evening, extramural or correspondence courses for adults at public general secondary, vocational and higher education institutions are free of charge. Work-related continuing training or retraining courses in these institutions are conducted on the basis of self-funding by participants or firms with interest in the training.

Riiklik Täiskasvanuhariduse Nõukogu (National Council of Adult Education) is a consultative body of the Estonian government in the areas of adult education. It co-ordinates the organisation of adult education and proposes the state's priorities in this field.

General education

Learning activities in schools are carried out in the form of daytime study, evening courses and distance learning. Persons who have acquired basic education may acquire general secondary education in the form of evening courses or distance learning, and graduate from the school as external students. Adults may acquire secondary education in secondary schools for adults.

Access to higher education

Most public universities and applied higher and vocational education institutions provide work-related adult education. Training is conducted in the form of evening or open university/correspondence-type courses. In the case of correspondence courses, adult students enrol for a full-time *diplom-*, *bakalaureus-*, *magister-* or *doktor-*study programme and receive the corresponding credentials on graduation.

In the Open University system, it is possible to combine university study-programmes and modules according to an individual study-plan. The purpose of study can be either professional development or aspiration towards an academic degree.

Those wishing to obtain university degree through Open University instruction are required to have completed their secondary education or equivalent education level giving access to higher education (for *diplom-* or *bakalaureus-* study) or a certain level of higher education to continue the studies on the next stage. General requirements are the same as for the full-time students.

Within a certain period – usually longer than in the case of full-time students – and after the fulfilment of the same graduation requirements, Open University students are awarded a university qualification.

There is no age limit for students applying for the Open University courses.

Vocational and professional training

Employment and vocational training as well as re-training are provided at work places or training institutions. A training institution can be a vocational education institution, a vocational education and training centre, higher education institution or a private training provider.

Apprenticeship training does not officially exist in Estonia. There are some enterprises and entrepreneurs that train persons or small groups on their own initiative and cost.

The Ministry of Education approves by a regulation the fields, forms and procedures for continuing vocational training organised for adults in vocational education institutions, taking into account the proposals of the school council and those of the vocational council of the corresponding field.

Continuing vocational training is usually provided in the form of payable courses, charged fees are paid by the party that commissioned the training.

Availability of educational leave

According to the Adult Education Act, an employee who holds a full-time job is entitled for a study leave. Study leave is granted on the basis of the employee's application and the education institution notification.

The length of the study leave for formal education can be 30 days a year, additional 28 days can be granted for the completion of basic education, 35 days for secondary education, 42 days for higher education, or 49 days for defending the *magister-* or *doktor-*thesis.

An employee is entitled for the average salary for ten days.

The period of study leave for professional training can be at least fourteen days, and for informal adult education, seven days a year.

3. LABOUR MARKET

3.1 INSTITUTIONS

The governing labour market institution in Estonia is the **Ministry of Social Affairs**. The main functions of the Ministry of Social Affairs include planning social policy and solving social problems in the following principal spheres:

- employment of the population and income policy;
- protection of people's health and medical care;
- social security and social insurance.

Within the Ministry, the Deputy Secretary General in the field of Labour Policy is responsible for labour market issues, and the Labour Market Department, Working Environment Department and Labour Relations Department are in charge of working out the policy in this field.

The Estonian **Labour Market Board**, established in April 1991, works under the governance of the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Labour Market Board is an operational body whose main functions are:

- to administer labour market services, bring together employees and employers, e.g. to collect information on vacancies; mediate employment; provide information on training opportunities ; pro-

- provide direct employment training, manage training stipends, subsidies and community placements;
- to organise unemployment registration, regulate the payment of benefits to the unemployed and supervise the entire process.

The Estonian Labour Market Board has a network of local **state employment offices**. Each of the 15 counties and the capital Tallinn has at least one employment office. State employment offices implement the governmental labour policy, register unemployed persons, provide employment services and pay state unemployment benefits in their respective region.

3.2 LABOUR MARKET POLICY

An **Employment Action Plan** 2000 4th quarter – 2001 has been prepared by the Ministry of Social Affairs in close co-operation with other relevant bodies, and was approved by the Government of the Republic on October 3, 2000. Accession to the European Union is one of the most important objectives for Estonia in the coming years. From the viewpoint of employment policy, the current aim of the country is to become ready to implement the European Employment Strategy, which is based on four pillars. The Action Plan has thus been structured on the basis of European Employment Guidelines. At the same time, the activities outlined in the Action Plan aim to reflect the current needs of the Estonian labour market, providing the opportunity to compare the situation with that in the EU Member States and to increase awareness on the European Employment Action Plans preparation procedure.

The **most important activities** outlined in the Action Plan are the following:

- 1) Development of the active labour market policy and increasing the number of persons benefiting from it;
- 2) Alleviation of financial problems of micro-enterprises;
- 3) Improvement of the access to information on entrepreneurship and simplification of the administrative procedures;
- 4) Development and adaptation of vocational education system to the needs of entrepreneurs and other target groups;
- 5) Integration of disadvantaged groups into the labour market;
- 6) Enhancing the administrative capacity of the Labour Market Board and Public Employment Services.

Starting from year 2001, the Employment Action Plan will be up-dated on a yearly basis.

In general, the same activities are also foreseen in the Employment chapter of the **National Development Plan 2001 – 2004**.

In accordance with the provisions of the Accession Partnership, the Commission is carrying out employment policy review in the candidate countries. The starting point of the **Employment Policy Review** is to agree on a Joint Assessment Paper, which focuses on the fundamental challenges in the field of employment. The first challenge arises from a recognition that labour markets have to reflect the needs of a dynamic market economy as part of a single market, which implies that labour has to be mobile, adaptable and skilled. Second challenge is to have relevant policies and appropriate institutions which support the development of a flexible labour market. This includes the need to promote a forward looking approach to industrial restruc-

turing in order to adapt to knowledge based economies and to face the impacts of demographic change. Joint Assessment of Employment Priorities in Estonia was signed by the Commissioner Ms Anna Diamatopoulou and the Estonian Minister of Social Affairs Mr Eiki Nestor on March 19, 2001.

3.3 LEGISLATION AND SERVICES

Since October 2000 social protection of the unemployed has been regulated by two new Acts – **Social Protection of Unemployed Act and Labour Market Services Act**.

The main changes implemented through these Acts are:

- prolongation of the period for which the unemployment benefits are paid from 180 days to 270 days
- broadening of the definition of the category “registered unemployed” which carries entitlement to labour market services.

According to the Act, a person is registered as **unemployed** after filling in an application for employment at a state employment office, if s/he meets the following **requirements**:

- is between the age of 16 and the age of retirement;
- is not employed or engaged in activity equal to work;
- is seeking employment.

Social protection of the unemployed in Estonia is provided by the state (i.e. is financed from the state budget and constitutes one part of the social protection system). Unemployment benefits are granted to those registered unemployed who meet the additional criteria of having been employed or

engaged in activity equal to work for at least 180 days in the last 12 months. Compared to other European countries, the unemployment benefits in Estonia are very low: since January 1999, the unemployment benefit has been 400 EEK, which is just over 7% of the gross average wage. There is no voluntary unemployment insurance, although preparations for this are underway.

All persons who are **registered as unemployed** are entitled to the following labour market services:

Informing about labour market situation and opportunities for labour market training – information about the current situation, changes and trends, trainers and programmes, professions and skills. The aim of giving named information is to enable persons to choose the most suitable job or the most purposeful employment service.

Job mediation – matching a person with a vacant position. The aim of job mediation is to find suitable work for persons who seek employment and the most suitable employees for employers, and to favour the employment of less competitive unemployed persons.

Labour market training and stipends – training, which gives the job seeker a possibility to obtain or to improve his/her vocational and professional knowledge, skills and proficiency, and allows him/her to adapt to the labour market and to find employment. The unemployed also have the possibility to receive retraining stipends. The amount of a stipend is 1,5 times the amount of unemployment benefit (600 EEK per month in year 2001).

Employment subsidy to start a business – subsidy up to 10,000 EEK,

granted to an unemployed person on the basis of a business plan, with the aim to help to create new quality workplaces and to support the starting of an enterprise.

Employment subsidy to employers – subsidy for the employers who employ less competitive people: persons who are partially incapacitated for work; pregnant women and persons who raise children under six years of age; young persons between 16 and 24 years of age; persons who enter retirement age within five years; persons released from prison; long-term unemployed. The amount of the employment subsidy for an employer who employs a less competitive unemployed person full-time, is during the first six months, the minimum monthly wage per month (1600 EEK in 2001), and during the following six months, 50 per cent of the minimum wage per month.

Community placement – paid temporary work for what a job seeker does not need special vocational or professional preparation.

Vocational guidance – consultation of the job seeker on the career and training opportunities, with an objective to find best possible employment, taking into account his/her education, professional qualifications and personal characteristics.

3.4 STATISTICS

In 1999, **expenditure on labour market policies** in Estonia accounted for 0,24% of the GDP, which is very low compared to the EU and the Central and Eastern European countries. Active labour market measures comprise

about 34% of total labour market expenditure. The most important active measure both in terms of participants and in terms of expenditure is labour market training. In 1999, expenditure on training accounted for 20,8% of the total budget followed by expenditure on administration of the state employment offices (8,2%), business start-up subsidies (2,3%), community placements (1,8%) and subsidies for employers (1,0%).

Since the onset of transition, the labour market has been characterised by important structural changes, in particular the fall in the number of employed workers, and the reduction in the participation and employment rates. The labour market was strongly affected by the decline in growth in 1998 – 99, with the **unemployment rate** (measured according to ILO methodology) jumping from 9,4% in the second quarter of 1997 to 13,9% in the fourth quarter of 2000.

Employment in Estonia fell substantially in the early years of the transition, in line with the contraction of economic activity. By 1993, total employment stood at 708,000, which is 16% down on the 1989 level of 838,000. Employment went on falling after 1993 despite the recovery in the economy, reaching 643,000 in the second quarter of 1998. Very rapid productivity gains were made over this period – **GDP per employed person** rose by 35% between 1994 and 1998. The **employment rate**, having fallen sharply from approximately 79% in the late 1980s, stabilised at just over 65% in the years 1995 – 98, but fell again to 61% in 2000. The fall in the employment rate has affected both men and women. The **male** rate is now estimated at about 65% and the **female** rate at 57%. The male rate is significantly below, and the female rate slightly above the respective rates in the EU. In terms of age-groups, Estonian employment rates are above the EU level for women aged 25 – 49, (74% as compared with 65%) and for both sexes at

age 50 and over. Employment rates are below the EU average for men aged 25 – 49, and for both sexes in the age-group 15 – 24.

Labour supply has fallen substantially since 1991, reflecting both demographic trends and some decline in labour force participation. The working-age population (15 – 64) fell from 1,04 million in 1991 to 0,97 million in early 2000 – a decline of some 7%. The decline has been sharpest in the age-groups 25 – 44 and 45 – 64; the young adult population (15 – 24) has been relatively stable. Most of the fall in the working-age population took place between 1991 and 1994, reflecting the high level of emigration during those years. At the same time, **labour force participation** has been falling. Overall participation for those aged 15 – 64 fell from 79% in 1989 to 70% in early 2000. The decline has been sharpest among those aged over 50 years (both sexes) and among females aged under 25. Despite this recent fall, overall participation between 15 and 64 years remains above the EU average (69% in 1999); the male rate is somewhat below the EU level, while female participation is significantly above the EU figure (65% as compared with 59% for the EU).

Unemployment is higher among men (14,7% in the second quarter of 2000) than among women (11,6%), with the gender difference being most marked in the age-group 50 – 64 and among young people aged 15 – 24 years.

As in other countries, **youth unemployment** is higher than adult unemployment, although the age-unemployment gap is relatively low by international standards. However, with the increase seen over the last two years, youth unemployment has now risen above the EU average. There is also wide variation in unemployment depending on educational qualifica-

tions – ranging from 5% among those with higher education to over 20% for those with only basic education. **Long-term unemployment** has been a growing feature of the labour market, with the proportion of the unemployed who are without work for more than one year rising from 30% in 1995 to 47% in mid-2000 (when long-term unemployment affected over 6% of the labour force).

Finally, regional disparities in employment have been reflected in growing regional divergence in unemployment as well. The highest unemployment is found in the south-east and north-east, and the lowest in Pärnu and Harju (the capital county).

4. GENERAL OUTLINE OF CAREERS GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

Careers guidance has been practised in Estonia for over 70 years. Similarly to the rest of the world, the development and nature of this field has been dependent on the interaction of several factors.

Mere recognition of the necessity and significance of careers guidance is not sufficient, the results in the area are determined by the state of the society, and its readiness to address these issues. An essential prerequisite here is the existence of industry and the related labour market, where the two participants – the employers and/or employees – are both interested in more efficient production and personal well being of people.

Throughout the entire history the attitude of the state authorities has had a considerable impact on the development of careers guidance in the country.

The authorities determine the distribution of the state funds allocated to the development of this field. In a totalitarian state, some sectors may be prohibited altogether or alternatively – their development is held back.

Careers guidance is closely related to psychology, thus one of the most vital influence factors is the level and the development prospects of the psychological sciences in the country. Studies in the field of psychology as well as teaching psychology at institutions of higher education ensure availability of specialists with required qualifications, and set the paradigm on the basis of which the people engaged in career counselling organise their work.

The following overview gives a brief description of the general outline of the history of careers guidance and counselling in Estonia.

4.1 THE FIRST PERIOD OF INDEPENDENCE

Around 1920s, Estonia began to recover from the chaos resulting from the collapse of the Russian Tsarist Empire, the Red Revolution and the consequent War of Independence. Next to agriculture, industry started to develop rapidly and like in other countries that had experienced industrial revolution, it brought to Estonia the need to improve labour efficiency. Employers needed assistance in finding high quality workforce.

During that period, the experimental psychology studies at the University of Tartu were carried out at a remarkable level for the time. These studies supported – primarily with respect to the development of methodology – also vocational counselling activities. The objective was to approach the entire

topic of vocational guidance from the scientific point of view.

Judging from the publications in the press, it may be observed that the basic issues of vocational guidance at the beginning of the 20th century have remained valid to this day.

Comprehensive consideration of one's personality was deemed vital when a person's suitability for a certain job was assessed. According to the traditions of psychology of the time, the person's memory, attentiveness, ability to combine etc were studied. Attention was also paid to one's adaptability and flexibility of thinking, with test assignments used to assess these abilities. Consideration of any contraindications to the person's health was deemed important.

On the other hand, importance was likewise attached to the satisfaction with the job. In addition to the abilities, one's inclinations were researched as well. It was believed that the person's work results were better when s/he was engaged in a job that suited both his/her abilities as well as was interesting for him/her.

Availability of objective information about actual work conditions was considered important in the careers guidance process. It was emphasised that vocational schools should acquaint the potential students with their schools and fields of study better. With respect to the further educational path of a child, the roles of both the careers guidance counsellor as well as of the teachers and parents were considered essential. Modern elements may likewise be detected in the attempts to strengthen co-operation relations between careers guidance counsellors, schools and employment offices.

The young Republic of Estonia made considerable efforts to create a nation-wide counselling system. The predominant point of view stated that counselling services must be accessible to young persons free of charge. In 1925, the first careers guidance counselling bureau in Estonia was established in Tartu upon a joint initiative of the local town and county governments. The purpose of founding such an institution was to offer young town and country people assistance in finding service places that suit would their abilities. Soon a similar bureau was founded in Tallinn.

It can be said that practical activities in the field of careers guidance were rather successful and well thought-through. For instance, the newspaper *Postimees* quotes the following in 1925: “*The Ministry of Education has received a letter from the Consul of Austria residing in Tallinn, which expresses the Consul’s interest in the organisation of careers guidance in Estonia*”.

Scientific research work was likewise carried out in the field of careers guidance. The Master’s thesis of Aleksis Kallitsa, entitled *School and Careers Guidance, Particularly in View of Estonian Circumstances*, and completed in 1933, discusses the majority of the principal careers guidance issues. The work considers the necessity of careers guidance at schools, analyses work education and issues related to familiarisation of youth with different vocations. The author finds that the students need to be provided with an overview of requirements applicable to various vocations, and to describe the appealing vocation on the basis of real life, so that a young person would be able to evaluate his or her options. It was recommended to establish workshops for students, and to organise *shows of vocational reality*. Instructions for providing vocational education were suggested, beginning from the first grade students.

4.2 WORLD WAR II

Before World War II, the Soviet Russia occupied Estonia and all careers guidance activities in Estonia were suspended. War times, as well as the times of Stalinist terror put a stop to the activities in the field of careers guidance, the same happened in the field of (applied) psychology. The post-war country introduced obligatory work postulate, while personal development of individuals and of personal needs were at the same time considered a taboo, these topics being altogether prohibited and condemned. In addition to that it was necessary to emphasise the principle of equality (of personality related preconditions) whereby the workers' and collective farmers' social status were officially very highly valued. All activities and enterprise in the mental sphere were considered third-grade. Combined with the extremely hard economic conditions of the time, it created a situation where there was no soil to nurture careers guidance.

4.3 RESTORATION OF CAREERS GUIDANCE IN THE 1960s

Only after the death of the dictator Stalin the activities in the field of vocational choice were resumed. The party ideology and rhetoric changed. During the period of seeming prosperity of the 1960s and the first years of the 1970s, when communism seemed to be only at an arm's distance, it became important to emphasise the party's concern about the happy future of the youth. The report of the Central Committee to the XXII Congress of the Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU) pointed out that the Soviet school must – in addition to all other tasks – prepare the young persons for a conscious choice of profession. Although this was merely plain party rhetoric and

consisted of numerous well-sounding slogans, it motivated many hopeful people. A new generation with no memories of the times of terror had emerged. The atmosphere of the so-called *thaw* period offered some room for reasonable thinking. Intellectuals in Soviet republics as well as in the rest of the so-called Socialist camp sensed this. Psychology came to be recognised as a scientific discipline again, and the universities began to teach the field. People who had acquired respective education started to act eagerly.

The business life of the state was controlled completely by the planned economy regime. Understandably any vocational guidance activities were also subject to centralised direction, and all the resources came entirely from the state.

Proceeding from the party guidelines, a number of acts and regulations were passed, which dealt – in a rather general way – with the need to improve careers guidance work targeted at young persons.

The existence of social procurement with respect to careers guidance was at the time questionable as the careers options were limited within the totalitarian state. The eloquent rhetoric often manifested a simple need to guide people to one or another sector of public economy. Jobs were guaranteed to people by the state, thus there was no actual need to be concerned about the topic and the word *career* had a rather negative connotation. The activities were targeted at young persons and were focussed on the assessment of their abilities, manifesting in various fields, by testing.

In 1968, vocational counselling centres were established within the departments of education in Tallinn and Tartu, shortly afterwards in Kohtla-Järve and Pärnu. In 1969, the Minister of Education of the Estonian SSR

approved the “Statutes of a vocational counselling centre in town (region)”, which specified the main tasks and staff (manager, methodologists, doctor) of a vocational guidance centre, as well as the tasks and required qualifications of the personnel.

For discussing and resolving main issues, each vocational counselling centre had a methodological council. This council comprised the manager of the centre (the chairperson of the council), the methodologists, a doctor and a representative of the department of education. The manager had the right to invite employees of schools, members of parents' committees, specialised doctors, as well as representatives of institutions, companies and organisations to participate in the work of the centre.

Although the guidelines for the work of vocational counselling centres were uniform, the actual work performed was different in many ways. For instance in Tartu a lot of attention was paid to introducing vocations at enterprises. Schools were given a plan of excursions, pupils attended if they were interested. It was recommended that students who visited vocational counselling centres brought with them references issued by the school.

The centres were also involved in research work. At the Tallinn Institute of Polytechnics, tests of mathematical aptitude as well as various researches were carried out with applicants for several years, serving as the basis of forecasting academic success of the university students. Scientific degrees in the field of careers guidance were likewise defended.

4.4 CAREERS GUIDANCE DURING THE STAGNATION PERIOD OF THE 1970s AND IN THE LAST YEARS OF THE SOVIET REGIME

In the 1970s, careers guidance activities were carried out according to a similar model, although the general development trends of the State were demonstrating signs of stagnation. The planned economy was exerting rising pressure, centralisation restricted freedom of local decision-making. The system of mandatory assignation to jobs was used both in institutions of higher education as well as in vocational schools, careers guidance was part of the planned economy. Mission-minded intellectuals, working in the field of careers guidance, tried to do their job as well as possible in these circumstances, manoeuvring between serving the interests of the state and the humanist approach.

In 1970, careers guidance was made compulsory at schools. On January 25, 1971, the instructions for vocational orientation at general education schools in the Estonian SSR were confirmed by the decree of the Minister of Education. In the course of an eight-year school programme, a 42-hour vocational orientation programme came to be delivered at class teacher's lessons. The instruction also described the obligations of people working at schools in how to organise vocational orientation. Teachers could find assistance in the publication "Methodological Recommendations for Vocational Orientation of Students", which included a chapter on the school's work with parents in preparing the children for the selection of a profession. The official objective of the vocational orientation at schools was to ensure the graduates' conscious, independent and voluntary choice of profession.

In 1970, the Council of Youth Vocational Orientation was established. Its

purpose was to co-ordinate the vocational orientation activities in the entire republic and to issue relevant recommendations. In order to help young persons to continue their education and to choose their future profession, altogether 24 vocational counselling centres were established in other towns and regions. The employees of the vocational counselling centres, mainly psychologists, received a good careers guidance education for the time.

The vocational counselling centres co-ordinated careers guidance at schools, organised information events and training for teachers. They collected statistical data related to vocational choice. Every spring the centres participated in the work of careers guidance committees, where students' decisions regarding pursuit of further education or employment were considered, while the actual behaviour of students was analysed again in the autumn. The activities of careers guidance committees were also confronted with criticism, because they were considered harassment of students with respect to their choice of career. The committees had access to information about the number of students admitted to vocational schools, and to which specialities. The study places of vocational schools were planned according to the needs of the national economy. The graduates were later assigned to work. As it was impossible to take everyone's wishes into consideration, the careers guidance specialist, being a public official, had to make compromises with his/her conscience and assign young persons to those jobs that the state needed. Vocational counselling centres were dispersed in 1988.

In 1970, a branch of the Soviet Union Scientific Research Institute of Labour Education and Vocational Orientation with four employees was established at the Scientific Research Institute of Pedagogical Sciences. The topics of the scientific research work were related to careers guidance.

During this period a considerable number of publications dealing with careers guidance and choice of profession were issued, some of which were targeted at young people while others aimed at assisting teachers who dealt with careers guidance.

In 1973, a careers guidance office was formed at the Tartu State University to function until 1994. The principal task of the office was to draw job descriptions for various study fields. At the foundation of the office, the management of the university set the office staff an objective to direct university applicants from the humanities, where the admission competition was high, to science specialities (physics, chemistry, mathematics), where competition was insufficient. The task seemed a rather unrealistic one, and for this reason the employees of the office started to research the issues: in 1974 a research was carried out in four departments, in 1975 it included already 99% of the university entrants. The entrants filled in an interest related questionnaire, and the vocational preferences and general aptitude test (GATB). Data of the academic merits at secondary school and university were used, as well as information from the references given to the entrants. Re-assessments were carried out in 1983 and in 1986. In 1985 – five years after graduation – all participants were sent a questionnaire in which they answered questions regarding their work and studies. During the following years similar studies were carried out in co-operation with the sociological research work of the laboratory of educational sociology at the Tartu State University.

During the first half of the 1980s, the careers guidance office of the Tartu State University changed into a careers counselling centre. The office employed several psychologists who had graduated from the university. Their services were available to all secondary school graduates in Estonia. Class teachers booked times in advance for admission of large pupil groups. Young people

were tested according to general aptitude tests and with short questionnaires composed according to the theory of J. Holland. The biggest importance was attached to the individual personality-focussed counselling session, carried out in the form of a dialogue and built on the results of the testing. Formerly, the test results had been discussed individually with the pupil and they had been compared to objective information, proceeding from the principle "Do no harm!" Gradually, with the increase of experience and knowledge, counsellors came to be able to afford themselves a more intervening approach for the benefit of the client. Since there was no strictly formulated state order with respect to the outcome of the work, it was possible to essentially shift from careers guidance (orientation of young persons towards the jobs set by the planned economy) to careers counselling that was supporting a young person in finding a job/way suitable personally for him or her. The respective personnel of the university also organised courses for the staff of the vocational counselling centres, the ideas of personality-focussed counselling were spread among the psychologists of the vocational counselling centres (who were continuously facing the need to make compromises between the state order and supporting individuality of young persons).

Since the end of 1987, careers guidance of young people in the Soviet Union was carried out completely centrally, a uniform nation-wide and centrally financed system, managed from Moscow, was created. In the Estonian context, it meant the establishment of an all-Estonian counselling system with the centre in Tallinn (the Estonian Centre of Careers Guidance) and with a division in Tartu that served South-Estonia. The latter was integrated with the existing careers guidance office of the university. The new structure, comprising specialists now gathered in two major centres, allowed to set the sights to new quality targets. The most remarkable event of that period was the organisation of practitioners' training, which was based on western-style

careers counselling principles. This allowed to compare the existing situation with that of the developed world, and to receive specialised tuition. Personal and professional contacts with colleagues supported the comparison of the content of careers guidance in different countries. Opportunities arose to invite professors and trainers from abroad. This initiated the development also of the other areas of applied psychology, which – in turn – had a rapid positive impact on counselling as most of the practitioners then were specialised in psychology.

4.5 CAREERS GUIDANCE AFTER THE RESTORATION OF INDEPENDENCE

After regaining its independence, the State of Estonia had to rebuild its economy. Private enterprise appeared, having received its initial impulse already in 1985 with the rise of co-operative enterprise during the Perestroika. Immediately after regaining independence, however, numerous other problems attained primary importance for the state and interest in careers guidance declined. Public procurement for this field was suspended, choosing a profession and finding a job after graduation became the concern of the youth themselves. The centralised public career guidance was replaced by several alternative organisations engaged in counselling.

Reorganisation of the economy also brought adults and the elderly, who had lost their previous steady jobs, among the target groups of careers guidance counsellors. People were given an opportunity to plan their actual careers, either in Estonia or abroad.

By today, the employers have understood the importance of high-quality

workforce and young people are motivated to study. Many private companies, providing personnel mediation services, are engaged in careers guidance. The State's activities in this field are still quite modest, but active work, aimed at the specification of the trends and establishment of a unified system, has already begun.

4.5.1 Careers Guidance within the Educational Sector

School psychologists. In 1990, the places of school psychologists were created at general education institutions. Many of these school psychologists also provide careers counselling services. Today they use mostly personality-centred humanistic counselling methods that help young people to determine their current situation: their aptitudes, personal characteristics and vocational orientations. Assistance is likewise offered to students in discovering their development potential and inner resources. The core nature of counselling has shifted: co-operation and communication between the client and the counsellor have come to replace formerly dominant testing and information provision. Due to the rapid changes in the society, increasing importance is being attached to the counsellors' counselling skills, as the practitioners are more and more often forced to deal with the clients' motivation, identity, self-esteem and socialisation problems. Young people have become more active, their freedom of choice as well as responsibility have grown considerably. While choosing the future profession, its economic, social and psychological aspects are taken into consideration.

However, the national resource centre, i.e. the Estonian Centre of Careers Guidance that had been created in 1987, and co-ordinated career planning activities in the country, was dissolved in 1993 by the decree of the Minister of Education, and this led to the gradual perishing of the system.

Official regional centres. The Education Act of the Republic of Estonia (RT I 1996, 51, 965) stipulates in § 7 vocational guidance of children and youth to be the responsibility of local self-governments. According to the Youth Work Act (RT 1999, 27, 392) § 5, the county governor has to organise guidance and counselling of young people in the county by contracting respective institution or specialist. Within the framework of the Criminal Prevention Programme, the Ministry of Education supported the foundation of 16 regional Careers Guidance and Counselling Centres in years 1999/2000 with premises and equipment (including 1 computer). Further support of these centres, however, has been meagre, and their co-ordination scarce.

Alternative structures. The last years of the 1990s saw the establishment of several new structures of vocational counselling. The inter-school training centres in major cities have their own psychology services whose priority is vocational counselling. The Estonian Youth Work Centre, working under the Ministry of Education, helps to put into practice several national and self-initiative programmes and projects in the field of youth work. The Centre offers young people information, counselling and training, organises annual information fair "Teeviit", deals with topics of cultural history etc.

University careers services. Several Estonian universities have established career centres to provide services for their students and graduates. The principal aim of these centres is to act as a bridge between the worlds of study and work, and to assist students in their career planning activities in general. This is achieved through job mediation and company presentations, personal counselling and advice, development of students' job-hunting skills, and various other careers-related lectures, seminars and workshops. Additional information is at some centres provided on international exchange programmes, funds and grants.

International programmes. A number of foreign programmes have reached Estonia as well. In years 1997 – 1998, for example, the Careers Centre of the Open Estonia Foundation introduced some careers guidance programmes to Estonia. Within their framework hundreds of teachers and school psychologists from all across Estonia received training.

Several organisations have been financed through the aid and co-operation programmes of the European Union. The National Observatory was founded to collect, analyse and disseminate education and labour market related information. In the autumn of 1998, the National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance (Euroguidance Estonia) was established within the Foundation Vocational Education and Training Reform in Estonia. The aim of the network of the named centres is to promote mobility and to enhance the European dimension in careers guidance and counselling.

Qualification. In June 2001, the careers counsellor occupational standard, developed by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, was affirmed. In fall 2001, the Ministry of Education is still in the process of adapting the draft of the career counsellors' training programme to the named qualification standard. The preliminary structure of this programme was developed in close collaboration with Professor Joachim Ertelt from Mannheim University, Germany. First modules are planned to be delivered to guidance practitioners from the educational and the labour market structures in December 2001.

4.5.2 Vocational Guidance within the Labour Market Sector

Before respective legislation. Under the Ministry of Social Affairs, largely psychology-based vocational counselling has been provided at employment offices since mid-1990s, although initially there was no respective legislation to regulate the services. The initiative for creating the counsellors' jobs came

from the ground level – from the regional employment offices where the necessity for this kind of activities was felt acutely. There were several objective reasons for this. Rapid changes of economy brought along the emerging of new professions, which required new qualifications and created the need for retraining and in-service training. The obligation to find one's way on the rapidly changing labour market, the ability to assess ones potential and resources for finding work, and readiness to take decisions became evident for many people of working age.

Vocational guidance and counselling services in the second half of the 1990s were available only in major centres, and they were provided with a strong inclination towards psychology. No counselling related statistics was collected and no essential analysis was carried out.

Since October 2000. The Labour Market Services Act that came into force on October 1, 2000, deemed vocational counselling to be a labour market service as stipulated by the law. 12 new vocational counsellor jobs were created. Today vocational guidance and counselling is offered by all employment offices across Estonia, although the smaller counties have only 0.5 counselling jobs each. The vocational guidance counsellor's job requires higher education. There are 16 counsellors working within the system, 14 of whom are psychologists. It is intended to organise in-service training for counsellors, as well as to develop uniform methodological instruments (tests, exercise-books instructing how to seek work and plan the career) and necessary information materials.

The right to receive vocational counselling services within the labour market sector is allocated to the unemployed, to persons who have received notice about the termination of their employment contract, and to official job seekers

who have registered themselves at employment offices.

Main target groups eligible to receive vocational counselling comprise people who:

- have no vocational education;
- have no previous work experience and whose knowledge of the working environment is limited;
- have not worked for a long time, and whose vocational qualification has thus become obsolete;
- who – by reason of health contraindications – cannot work in the field they have been qualified for;
- cannot find work that matches the acquired vocational qualifications, due to the lack of demand on the labour market;
- cannot assess his or her preconditions for making a choice of vocation, or for finding a suitable vocational training and/or work place.

Methods. Vocational counselling is carried out both as individual work as well as in group sessions. In the course of counselling the careers guidance counsellor helps to specify the educational and job related aspirations of the person seeking work, to map the existing qualifications and those that need further development, to assess professional suitability and to take decisions in making vocational, educational and work related choices. The vocational counsellor also provides instructions for finding a job.

In 1998, the Labour Market Board purchased some methodological instruments, i.e. tests (Holland vocational preferences questionnaire, General Aptitude Test Battery GATB, Myers-Briggs Test Inventory MBTI – test for the determination of behavioural and communications preferences) for the vocational counsellors, working at that time within the system. These tests are still in use today.

Summary

In fall 2001, one cannot yet speak about a unified and sufficiently regulated vocational guidance and counselling system in Estonia. The respective need has been officially recognised though, and steps are being made to find optimum solutions. The objective is to develop a specifically Estonian model, which corresponds best to the local characteristics, reflects the foremost European practice but is at the same time no exact copy of any particular system already employed in another country.

Efficient collaboration between the two ministries – the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Affairs – that currently organise the provision of services, is an essential prerequisite for a sustainable and satisfactory outcome. Special attention needs to be devoted to the joint training of practitioners and to the production of methodological and information materials. First steps to enhance co-operation and raise the level of provided services have already been made. A characteristic example was the establishment of three working groups in May 2001, comprising representatives of both systems. They dealt with the issues of training needs, the role and possible location of a national guidance and counselling co-ordination unit, and the further joint development of related databases and electronic services. Co-operation is likely to continue.

International co-operation is likewise gaining importance. Through various EU funded programmes it has become possible for both the practitioners as well as the end-users to study and train in Europe, and to participate in various transnational projects. International experience thus gained broadens the local perspectives and helps to keep pace with the developments in the world. Mobility is to be supported further at all levels of education and

professional life in general.

The substitution of a staircase-image of one's career for the one of a road passing through life and encompassing all contexts that people operate in and all roles that they take, is gradually spreading in Estonia. We are facing the task of both starting the systematic implementation of this understanding from the very early age as well as of responding adequately to the consequences arising from this. Combined with the ever-changing needs of the labour market, and the expanding borders, those new trends pose enormous challenges to the guidance and counselling practitioners. The latter are furthermore faced with the need to employ modern working tools and techniques, including the ones in the field of IT. Web-based guidance tools are gradually being developed both in public (e.g. information system *Pathfinder*) as well as in the private sector (e.g. *CV-Online*) in Estonia, and there are plans for the adaptation of several new ones from Europe.

In the light of circumstances described above, it can be said that the field of careers guidance and counselling is gradually gaining deserved importance and scope in Estonia, and is hence in the process of vigorous development.

5. APPENDICES

Bibliography

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PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Haridusministeerium (Ministry of Education)

Munga 18, Tartu
50088 ESTONIA
tel (+372) 735 0222
fax (+372) 735 0250
hm@hm.ee
www.hm.ee

Eesti Teadus- ja Arendusnõukogu (Estonian Research and Development Council)

Kohtu 6, Tallinn
10130 ESTONIA
www.tan.ee

Haridusministeeriumi Koolivõrgu Büroo (School Network Office)

Tõnismägi 11, Tallinn
15192 ESTONIA
tel (+372) 628 1220
fax (+372) 628 1275
kristiina.paist@hm.

Eesti Teadusfond (Estonian Science Foundation)

Kohtu 6, Tallinn
10130 ESTONIA
tel (+372) 645 1741
fax (+372) 645 0701
etf@etf.ee
www.etf.ee

**Kõrghariduse Hindamise
Nõukogu
(Higher Education Quality
Assessment Council)**

Kohtu 6, Tallinn
10130 ESTONIA
tel (+372) 631 1072
fax (+372) 631 1404
laasberg@tan.ee

**Riiklik Eksami- ja
Kvalifikatsioonikeskus
(State Examination and
Qualification Centre)**

Sakala 21, Tallinn
10141 ESTONIA
tel (+372) 646 1676
fax (+372) 646 1677
mail@ekk.edu.ee
www.eek.edu.ee

STUDENT CAREER CENTRES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**Rahvusvaheline Concordia
Ülikool Eestis (CONCORDIA
International University Estonia)**

Kaluri tee 3, Harjumaa
74001 ESTONIA
tel (+372) 609 0077
fax (+372) 609 0216
mona@ciue.edu.ee
www.ciue.edu.ee

**Tallinna Pedagoogikaülikool
(Tallinn Pedagogical University)**

Narva mnt 25, Tallinn
10120 ESTONIA
tel (+372) 640 9134
fax (+372) 640 9116
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www.tpu.ee

Estonian Business School

Lauteri 3, Tallinn
10114 ESTONIA
tel (+372) 665 1313
birgit.valner@ebs.ee
www.ebs.ee

**Tallinna Tehnikaülikool
(Tallinn Technical University)**

Ehitajate tee 5, Tallinn
19086 ESTONIA
tel (+372) 620 3518
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www.ttu.ee

Tartu Ülikool
(University of Tartu)
 Ülikooli 20 – 301, Tartu
 50090 ESTONIA
 tel (+372) 737 6205
 fax (+372) 737 5153
 tamargit@ut.ee
 www.ut.ee

PUBLIC LABOUR MARKET INSTITUTIONS

Sotsiaalministeerium
(Ministry of Social Affairs)
 Gonsiori 29, Tallinn
 15027 ESTONIA
 tel (+372) 626 9700
 fax (+372) 699 2209
 smin@sm.ee
 www.sm.ee

Eesti Haigekassa
(Estonian Health Insurance Fund)
 Lembitu 10, Tallinn
 10114 ESTONIA
 tel (+372) 620 8430
 fax (+372) 620 8449
 info@csf.ee
 www.csf.ee

Kodakondsus- ja Migratsiooni-
amet (Citizenship and Migration
Board)
 Endla 13, Tallinn
 15179 ESTONIA
 tel (+372) 612 6979
 fax (+372) 631 3744
 kma@mig.ee
 www.mig.ee

Eesti Tervisekasvatuse Keskus
(Estonian Centre for Health
Education and Promotion)
 Rüütli 24, Tallinn
 10130 ESTONIA
 tel (+372) 627 9280
 fax (+372) 627 9281
 kadi@tervis.ee
 www.tervis.ee

**Tervisekaitse Inspektsioon
(Estonian National Health
Protection Inspection)**

Paldiski 81, Tallinn
10617 ESTONIA
tel (+372) 656 7700
fax (+372) 656 7706
kesk@tki.estnet.ee

**Tööinspektsioon
(Estonian National Labour
Inspectorate)**

Estonia pst 5, Tallinn
10143 ESTONIA
tel (+372) 640 9080
fax (+372) 640 9085
ti@ti.ee
www.ti.ee

**Sotsiaalkindlustus Amet
(Estonian National Social
Insurance Board)**

Lembitu 12, Tallinn
15092 ESTONIA
tel (+372) 640 8120
fax (+372) 640 8155
ska@ensib.ee
www.ensib.ee

**Tööturuamet
(Estonian Labour Market Board)**

Luha 16, Tallinn
10129 ESTONIA
tel (+372) 646 2046
fax (+372) 631 1214
tta@tta.ee
www.tta.ee

**Ravimiamet
(State Agency of Medicines)**

Ravila 19, Tartu
50002 ESTONIA
tel (+372) 737 4140
fax (+372) 737 4142
sam@sam.ee
www.sam.ee

**Rahvatervise Arendusnõukogu
(Public Health and Social Training
Centre)**

tel (+372) 626 9739
sirje@sm.ee
www.sm.ee/rahvatervis.html

**Sotsiaalmajandusnõukogu
(Estonian Social and Economic
Council)**

tel (+372) 626 9777
www.sm.ee/SMN1.html

OTHER RELEVANT ORGANISATIONS

Eesti Täiskasvanute Koolitajate Assotsiatsioon – ANDRAS (The Association of Estonian Adult Educators)

Lasnamäe 52, Tallinn
11413 ESTONIA
tel (+372) 638 390
fax (+372) 638 0180
andras@andras.ee
www.andras.ee

Sihtasutus ARCHIMEDES (Foundation for European Union Education and Research Programmes ARCHIMEDES)

arch@euedu.ee www.euedu.ee

Office in Tallinn:

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fax (+372) 696 2419

Office in Tartu:

Kompanii 2, Tartu
51007 ESTONIA
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fax (+372) 730 0336

Socrates Estonian National Agency (Grundvig, Minerva, Arion, Erasmus,
Comenius, Lingua, Eurydice, ENIC/NARIC) www.socrates.ee

Centre for Higher Education Accreditation www.ekak.archimedes.ee

Fifth Framework Programme www.irc.ee

Information Systems in Education www.ise.ee

Youth for Europe www.euroopa.noored.ee

European Survey of Information Society ESIS www.esis.ee

Sihtasutus Eesti Kutsehariduse Reform
(Foundation Vocational Education and Training Reform in Estonia)
sekr@sekr.ee www.sekr.ee

PHARE kutsehariduse projektid
(PHARE VET projects)

Liivalaia 2, Tallinn
10118 ESTONIA
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(Estonian National Observatory)

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Eesti Ärikoolitusprogramm
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Eesti Leonardo keskus
(Leonardo da Vinci National
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**Euroopa Komisjoni Delegatsioon
Eestis
(Delegation of the European
Commission in Estonia)**
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10130 ESTONIA
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**Euroopa Liidu Infokeskus
(European Union Information
Centre)**
Roosikrantsi 17, Tallinn
10119 ESTONIA
tel (+372) 631 4710
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www.euroopaliit.ee

OTHER USEFUL LINKS

PATHFINDER www.rajaleidja.ee/pathfinder

PATHFINDER is an English language output of the Estonian career planning database *Rajaleidja*. The tool is aimed above all at individuals and organisations from other countries interested in Estonian educational system, structures and studying opportunities, and labour market issues. In addition, one can find some background knowledge about local life and culture. Particular target group is perceived in institutions and companies that are looking for potential Estonian project partners within the framework of Leonardo da Vinci programme.

ESTIA www.estia.educ.goteborg.se

ESTIA website is a tool for guidance counsellors dealing with enquiries about working, training and studying in different European countries. Estonian information has been available since autumn 2001.

EUROGUIDANCE NETWORK www.euroguidance.org.uk

The Euroguidance website offers information on the activities of the network and direct access to each network member. In addition, one can find links to up to date information on the development of the European dimension within guidance, education and vocational training, and transnational projects.

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