

INTERACT – RESEARCHING THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS’ INTEGRATION AS A THREE-WAY PROCESS - IMMIGRANTS, COUNTRIES OF EMIGRATION AND COUNTRIES OF IMMIGRATION AS ACTORS OF INTEGRATION

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Integration Policy Instruments in Estonia

Mari-Liis Jakobson

INTERACT Research Report 2014/21

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Immigrants, Countries of Emigration and Countries of Immigration as Actors of
Integration

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Mari-Liis Jakobson

Research Assistant for INTERACT, Tallinn University, Estonia

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European University Institute
Badia Fiesolana
I – 50014 San Domenico di Fiesole (FI)
Italy

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INTERACT - Researching Third Country Nationals' Integration as a Three-way Process - Immigrants, Countries of Emigration and Countries of Immigration as Actors of Integration

Around 25 million persons born in a third country (TCNs) are currently living in the European Union (EU), representing 5% of its total population. Integrating immigrants, i.e. allowing them to participate in the host society at the same level as natives, is an active, not a passive, process that involves two parties, the host society and the immigrants, working together to build a cohesive society.

Policy-making on integration is commonly regarded as primarily a matter of concern for the receiving state, with general disregard for the role of the sending state. However, migrants belong to two places: first, where they come and second, where they now live. While integration takes place in the latter, migrants maintain a variety of links with the former. New means of communication facilitating contact between migrants and their homes, globalisation bringing greater cultural diversity to host countries, and nation-building in source countries seeing expatriate nationals as a strategic resource have all transformed the way migrants interact with their home country.

INTERACT project looks at the ways governments and non-governmental institutions in origin countries, including the media, make transnational bonds a reality, and have developed tools that operate economically (to boost financial transfers and investments); culturally (to maintain or revive cultural heritage); politically (to expand the constituency); legally (to support their rights).

INTERACT project explores several important questions: To what extent do policies pursued by EU member states to integrate immigrants, and policies pursued by governments and non-state actors in origin countries regarding expatriates, complement or contradict each other? What effective contribution do they make to the successful integration of migrants and what obstacles do they put in their way?

A considerable amount of high-quality research on the integration of migrants has been produced in the EU. Building on existing research to investigate the impact of origin countries on the integration of migrants in the host country remains to be done.

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For more information:

INTERACT

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (EUI)

Villa Malafasca

Via Boccaccio 151

50133 Florence

Italy

Tel: +39 055 46 85 817/892

Fax: + 39 055 46 85 755

Email: mpc@eui.eu

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

<http://www.eui.eu/RSCAS/>

Abstract

This research report gives an overview of the context and tools of integration policies in Estonia. As the overview suggests, the sphere of integration policy is in tension and is partially securitised, particularly due to conflicting goals with the Compatriot Policy of the Russian Federation. The field of integration is still dominantly focused on the Russophone population who immigrated to Estonia during the Soviet period. Estonian At the same time, integration policies are also beginning to deal with new immigrants, and the government institutions are starting to implement policies targeted to that particular group. There are also three distinct groups of nongovernmental organisations operating in the field of integration policy: the cultural associations funded by the government and in accordance with national integration policy goals, the political minority associations—among which several probably receive funding from Russia, and NGOs providing services, which have rather different profiles. However, there are also a number of for-profit firms, public schools etc. that get funding from the state integration budget and provide services. This results from the outsourcing of integration-related activities by government institutions.

Key words: Estonia, integration policies, policy implementation, policy instruments

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Table of contents

Introduction	7
1. Context	8
1.1 Target Groups of Integration Policies	8
1.2 Integration on the Political Agenda.....	9
1.3 Focus of Integration Policies.....	11
2. Institutions Developing Integration Public Policies	13
2.1 Policy-Making Institutions.....	13
2.2 Implementing Institutions	14
2.3 Policy Tools Supporting Integration	14
3. Engagement of Non-State Actors.....	16
3.1 Cultural Associations	17
3.2 Political Minority Organisations	17
3.3 Service Providers	18
4. List of Relevant Bi- and Multilateral International Agreements	19
5. Assessment on the Implementation of the Policy Framework	19
Bibliography	20

Introduction

Integration is a prominent topic on the national agenda in Estonia. It has been estimated that around 24% of inhabitants have an immigrant background (Asari 2009: 12). However, the majority of them never immigrated to Estonia per se, but rather became immigrants after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the re-establishment of sovereign nation-states (Vihalemm 1997). This also gives the subject a particular colouring and position on the political agenda. It is a prominent topic not only on the policy agenda, but also an issue of contention among the political parties and in the media.

But the focus of the debate has been shifting over time. While the 1993 Aliens Act attempted to exclude the migrant population by determining their status as foreigners in Estonia, later policy programs have attempted to move towards the integration perspective. Initially, integration was perceived primarily in linguistic-cultural terms, but later the focus shifted to the achievement of social cohesion (Nimmerfeldt, Rikmann and Hallik 2014: 5). More recently, integration strategy documents have also begun to take notice of new immigrants, but even more importantly, who might be arriving in the near future. Although Estonia has had a rather restrictive and unchanged immigration and asylum policy (European Migration Network 2012: 6) over the years, some minor changes are occurring. The 2011 government coalition agreement proposes a more favourable view on the immigration of highly-skilled migrants (European Migration Network 2012: 8), and in 2013, several modifications were made to the Aliens Act. For instance, now the act defines a highly-skilled migrant, enables migrants to apply for residency after arriving in Estonia, and institutionalises an adaptation program for newly-arrived migrants.

This research report aims to give an overview of integration policies in Estonia and their gradual re-orientation towards new immigrants. The first part introduces the context of the policies: the target groups of current integration policies, the character of the political agenda over the issue, and the main foci of the integration policies. Next the organisation of policy-making and implementation are introduced. The report lists the institutions developing and implementing the integration policies and the policy tools that apply to the issue. The third part of the report introduces various types of non-governmental actors engaged in the integration process. The fourth part lists the relevant international and bilateral agreements, and the fifth part provides a short assessment of the implementation of the policies.

As stated, the field of integration is currently undergoing several changes which are still being debated and are not yet implemented. This is also reflected in the content of this report, which introduces both the implemented policies as well as the new policy proposals.

1. Context

1.1 Target Groups of Integration Policies

According to the 2011 census, there are representatives of 192 nationalities¹ residing in Estonia, 31.3% of the population belongs to a minority ethnicity (Population and Housing Census 2011). The following table (Table 1) introduces the major ethnic groups.

Table 1. Major ethnic groups in Estonia

Ethnic nationality	Number of inhabitants	Ethnic nationality	Number of inhabitants
Estonian	889,770	Jewish	1,927
Russian	321,198	Latvian	1,716
Ukrainian	22,302	Lithuanian	1,682
Belarusian	12,419	Polish	1,622
Finnish	7,423	German	1,490
Tartar	1,945	Armenian	1,402

In March 2014, 84.3% of the population held Estonian citizenship; 6.5% of the population have undetermined citizenship, or the so-called Grey Passport; the remaining 9.2% are citizens of other states (Population Register).

The main target group of Estonian integration policies are ‘the Russophone’: immigrants – who migrated from other parts of the Soviet Union before Estonia regained its independence – and their descendants. Most of them speak Russian as their first language (thus including Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Tatars, Armenians, some Latvians, Lithuanians, Polish, etc.). An additional program for ‘new immigrants’ is also being developed, but this group is still rather small and is in part, inseparable from the ‘Russophone’ programmes since some of the main countries of immigration are still Russia, Ukraine etc. In the recent years, the annual immigration rate has been around 4,000 persons, but this includes return migrants (Kallas and Pohla 2014).

Integration Monitoring 2011 organized the Russophone minority into various clusters according to their level of integration. It has differentiated between five clusters according to the respondents’ attitudes, language skills, and level of integration (Integration Monitoring 2011a: 11):

- successfully integrated (A): good command of Estonian, societally integrated, strong citizen identity² – 21% of respondents;
- Russian-speaking Estonian patriots (B): poor command of Estonian, somewhat societally integrated, strong citizen identity – 16%;

¹ Country of origin, not necessarily country of citizenship.

² In order to explain the different integration levels, The Integration Monitoring (2011a and 2011b) compiled an index of linguistic, legal, and political integration, taking into account citizenship status, perceived homeland, self-identification with the constitutional principle of ‘Estonian people’, and language proficiency. Thus, for example, the successfully integrated (group A) respondents had Estonian citizenship, perceived Estonia as their homeland and themselves as part of the Estonian people, and were fluent in Estonian. At the same time, they were not necessarily culturally assimilated. Group B expresses stronger legal-political integration (i.e. Estonian citizens), feels at home in Estonia and identifies with the Estonian people, but has little knowledge of Estonian language. Group C has better language skills and also holds Estonian citizenship, but does not identify with Estonians or see Estonia as their homeland.

- critically-minded Estonian speakers (C): good command of Estonian, somewhat societally integrated, weak citizen identity – 13%;
- modestly integrated (D): poor command of Estonian, somewhat societally integrated, weak citizen identity – 28%;
- not integrated (E): poor command of Estonian, not societally integrated, no (Estonian) citizen identity – 22%.

The most problematic clusters for integration are groups D and E, but the report also calls for special attention and engagement of groups B and C, who are more integrated but need further encouragement to maintain a positive stance toward integration (Integration Monitoring 2011a: 11).

1.2 Integration on the Political Agenda

Integration is a rather contentious subject in Estonia. Attitudes toward integration or even the understanding of the concept of integration tends to differ among and within the majority and minority ethnic populations (Asari 2009; Integration Monitoring 2008, 2011a and 2011b; IBS 2013). This is particularly true with regards to the integration of the sizable Russophone community in Estonia. The new immigrants are a rather novel topic that has not been debated much. However, research on individual attitudes has reflected a rather low willingness to accept new immigrants in Estonia (Integration Monitoring 2011b).

The polarisation among the clusters has likely been induced by the identity politics of the Estonian as well as the Russian state (e.g. supported by the Compatriot Policy of the Russian Federation). One of the most important events that contributed to re-politicising (or even radicalising) the integration issue was the displacement of a WWII memorial called the Bronze Soldier, which was of importance to part of the Russophone population. (Initially the monument was installed in the memory of the ‘liberators of Tallinn’, i.e. the Soviet forces that occupied the city in 1944). The monument was moved from Tõnismägi in the centre of Tallinn to a military cemetery on 26 April 2007 without any prior information or consultations. The disposal of the monument resulted in riots and a notable decrease in attitudinal integration indicators (Integration Monitoring 2008).

The issues concerning the Russophone minority in Estonia are a topic that is continuously debated in the media – both in Estonian and Russian (but particularly in the latter). The results of the bi-annual Integration Monitoring reports usually draw a vibrant debate in the media. However, there is no unanimous understanding of how to integrate. Particularly among the Russophone population, the issue of integration even draws resentment. For instance, a pejorative word “*integrast*” for a pro-integration Russian has been formed in online discourse.³ Some Estonian nationalist forces do not see integration as necessary at all, claiming that whoever wants to, can assimilate, and the rest can leave; the state should not put resources into this topic.⁴

The topic of interethnic relations is also a politicised one – it is used to mobilise voters among both Estonians and Russophones by different political parties. The ethnic cleavage (in combination with geopolitical and historical memory) is one of the most prominent dividing lines in the Estonian party system (Saarts 2011; Ehin and Solvak 2012; Vogt and Lagerspetz 2013). The most prominent party among the Russophone electorate is the Centre Party – a rather conservative leftist party. Also the Social Democratic Party tends to be more attentive towards the Russophone population, while the right-wing parties – the conservative ProPatria and Res Publica Union and the liberal Estonian Reform

³ The term sprang from the commentaries of Delfi, the largest Estonian news portal in Russian.

⁴ Such propositions have been put forth by several national conservative political movements and also by more marginal parties, e.g. in the electoral manifesto of the Estonian Independence Party in 2011.

Party – have a more assimilationist view on ethnic minorities. The ProPatria and Res Publica Union has also occasionally expressed more segregationist views.

An assessment of the electoral manifestos (in Estonian language)⁵ of the 2011 general election indicated that the issue of integration was explicitly covered in six party manifestos (out of nine). It was most prominent in the manifesto of the Social Democratic Party, which proposed a more multi-cultural alternative to the current integration policy (e.g. translation of legal and other texts into Russian, maintaining a Russophone schooling system and slowly transforming it, give automatic citizenship for all underage children of residents who have not acquired it yet, etc.). The Reform Party also proposed a rather elaborate program, which centred largely on language tuition as a guarantee of better social and economic wellbeing, and on the retention of cultural autonomy. Other parties were usually more laconic about their plans. ProPatria and Res Publica Union had no section on integration, but instead had one on “memory and nationalism,” thus depicting how the party remains on the other side of the ethnic cleavage. However, as parties generally tone down populist sentiment once they take office, the ProPatria and Res Publica Union addresses the issue in a rather moderate manner in the coalition agreement.

In the coalition agreement of 2011, the issues of integration are in a separate chapter. Ethnic minorities are also addressed under both educational policy and cultural policy. The coalition program on integration reads: “the goal of the coalition is to ensure equal opportunities for successful coping and for the welfare for all people living in Estonia, irrespective of ethnic belonging or mother tongue” (Coalition Programme 2011).

The topic was also presented in the coalition agreement of 2007 (Coalition Programme 2007). During the first half of this coalition, a Minister of Ethnic Affairs was also assigned to deal with the issue. But the removal of the Bronze Soldier overrode these intentions and the position was dismissed when the Social Democrats left the governing coalition in 2009.

The new coalition agreement of 2014-2015 between the Reform Party and the Social Democratic Party focuses primarily on the naturalisation criteria, alleviating some rules for minors and the elderly (Coalition Programme 2014).

There are two broader policy documents regulating integration: the “Initial Outline of Estonian National Integration Policy for Integrating Non-Estonians into Estonian society,” adopted by the parliament in 1998, marking broad outlines for the policy; and a national integration strategy adopted by the government for a period of 7 years, which also has an implementation plan and a budget. These are among the 64 key national policy strategies adopted in by the parliament or by the cabinet of ministers.

There have been two strategies so far: “Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007” and “Estonian Integration Strategy 2007-2013.” The third strategy, “the Strategy of Integration and Social Cohesion in Estonia 2020” has been drafted and is currently in the consultation process before adoption. Integration-related activities are financed from both national tax revenue and EU funds.

⁵ Some parties also issue their manifesto in Russian, sometimes with significant changes from the Estonian version, but these were unavailable at the time of writing this analysis. The different content of the Estonian and Russian manifestos would also explain the stance of the Estonian Centre Party, which is the most popular party among the Russophone population.

1.3 Focus of Integration Policies

As mentioned before, there has been a shift in integration discourse as well as in policy. While the first integration strategy “Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007” focussed primarily on linguistic and cultural integration – the promotion of Estonian language-learning and the retention of the minority’s cultural autonomy – more recent strategies focus more on societal integration. There were five key foci in the Estonian Integration Strategy 2008-2013:

- cultural autonomy of minorities – e.g. maintaining, practicing, and introducing one’s culture via cultural associations, which receive grants for this purpose from the state;
- societal integration – e.g. increasing contacts between people from different ethnic and linguistic communities, increasing trust between different nationalities living in Estonia, supporting coverage of integration in the Estonian media;
- civic integration – e.g. obtaining democratic values, and decreasing the participation gap between Estonian-speaking and Russian-speaking populations in civil society organisations;
- legal integration (naturalisation) – e.g. decreasing the number of people with undetermined citizenship;
- economic integration – e.g. decreasing the differences in employment and income levels between employees of different ethnic groups.⁶

The economic factor became more prominent during that strategy period – probably also due to the economic recession. For example, the rhetoric of the government coalition agreement of 2011 is to a great extent economic. Learning the Estonian language was also prominent (in both documents), but it was not set as a separate focus, but rather as a precondition to other forms of integration, e.g. societal, legal, and economic integration.

The integration strategy for 2008-2013 establishes objectives in three key areas – educational and cultural integration, social and economic integration, and legal and political integration.

In the field of educational and cultural integration, the main goal “is to ensure that all residents of Estonia have equal opportunities to receive education through a common education system and to provide the conditions for preserving one’s language and culture” (Estonian Integration Strategy 2008: 18). The main goals seem to be: the homogenisation of the education that pupils obtain from school regardless of their native tongue or the language of instruction, improved command of Estonian language (and preparation for citizenship exams), the multi-culturalisation of the content that is taught, as well as the preservation of the cultural autonomy of minorities.

In the field of social and economic integration, the key goals are to decrease “mother-tongue-based division on the labour market” (Estonian Integration Strategy 2008: 22) by offering language courses and labour exchange programmes to integrate ethnically segregated sectors, and to outline an

⁶ The strategy included most of these examples as measured and quantified outcomes. For instance, in 2012, the *Report on Fulfilling the Implementation Plan of the ‘Estonian Integration Programme 2008-2013* (Ministry of Culture 2012) cited the self-evaluations of command of the language, which had improved over time (while in 2007, 22% of respondents evaluated their command of Estonian as “good”; 25% evaluated it as “medium”, 29% as “minimal,” and 24% as “non-existent”). In 2010, 27% evaluated their language skills as “good”, 27% as “medium”, 28% as “minimal,” and 19% as “non-existent”. Contacts and communication with people of different mother tongues: in 2007, 65% of Estonians said they had none and 35% of Estonians said they had some; 39% of people of another origin said they had none and 61% said they had some. By 2011, the number of Estonians with no contacts and communications with people with different mother tongues had decreased to 45% and the number of people of another origin with no contacts had decreased to 20%.

adaptation⁷ program for new immigrants (people who have migrated to Estonia after it regained independence).

In the field of legal and political integration, the aim is to ensure that everyone has equal legal and political rights and opportunities – thus the emphasis is on continuing to support the naturalisation of non-citizen residents, increasing awareness about equal treatment and prevention of unequal treatment, raising administrative capacity to provide services to persons with different mother tongues, and ensuring that people with other mother tongues can be better integrated into the Estonian public sphere.

The integration strategy for 2008-2013 also proposes activities related to the adaptation of new immigrants. For instance, it initiated the creation of the adaptation program for new immigrants, and the development and implementation of courses and materials for new immigrants.

The newest strategy document, “the Strategy of Integration and Social Cohesion in Estonia 2020”, still being processed by the government at the time of writing this report, shifts the focus from the primarily Russophone ethnic minorities to immigrants more generally, including new immigrants. In short, the strategy has three main goals:

- the consolidation of values and dispositions that support integration;
- the integration of modestly integrated permanent residents with foreign backgrounds via the growth of acquisition of citizenship and new societal knowledge
- the adaptation of new immigrants to Estonian society (Estonian Integration Strategy 2014: 14-18).

These rather general goals include more specific actions which are already familiar from earlier strategies. For instance, values and dispositions that support integration are expected to evolve via actions supporting a unified info sphere, cooperation and engagement projects, and support for minority cultural associations. Language tuition, counselling, language immersion and integrated study programs, and civic education are proposed to support integration goals. The adaptation of temporary new migrants focuses on offering adaptation courses and developing assistance services.

In addition the new integration strategy also cites activities mentioned in other strategy documents, thus also having a more socio-economic focus. The goals include competitive educational output for students studying in schools where the tuition language is other than Estonian; youth with mother tongue other than Estonian participate actively in youth social work and forge ties with youth whose mother tongue is Estonian; and that the workforce whose mother tongue is other than Estonian would also have access to professional trainings that would keep them competitive in the labour market (ibid: 19-24).

⁷ *Kohanemisprogramm* in Estonian – also the word “accommodation” is used in some unofficial translation.

2. Institutions Developing Integration Public Policies

Integration is a horizontal field that is coordinated by various ministries and different implementing institutions. The following gives a brief overview of the more important institutions and their responsibilities.

2.1 Policy-making Institutions

The leading institution developing integration policy is the Cultural Diversity Department of the Ministry of Culture⁸ whose “main task is coordinating goals related to integration policy, creating conditions for the development of cultural life of ethnic minorities and their integration into Estonian society, supporting cultural ties with compatriots and kin ethnicities [e.g. other Fenno-Ugric ethnicities], making propositions to ensure the development of these fields, and preparing respective legislation”.

In relation to integration, the Ministry of Culture:

- coordinates the drafting of the integration strategies (at present the drafting of “the Strategy of Integration and Social Cohesion in Estonia 2020” is finished and in the consultation phase);
- organises the monitoring of integration processes;
- organises citizenship ceremonies for naturalised citizens;⁹
- coordinates policies related to the cultural autonomy of national minorities and organises the attestation and financing of minority cultural associations. (Statute of the Cultural Diversity Department: §5.)

In addition, the issue of integration also falls to a number of other ministries:

The **Ministry of the Interior** deals with the development and implementation of immigration policy, develops an introductory adaptation program called Welcome Program for new immigrants, and is responsible for citizenship, migration policy, and residence permits. The Ministry of the Interior also finances associations dealing with asylum seekers and migration.

The **Ministry of Education and Research** is responsible for language policy and language tuition for non-native speakers as well as the transition of middle schools with tuition in Russian language to tuition in Estonian.¹⁰

The **Ministry of Social Affairs** is responsible for developing legislation concerning non-discrimination and equal treatment. The Ministry of Social Affairs also coordinates the work of the housing centre for asylum seekers.

The **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** deals with the implementation of international conventions on human rights and coordinates visa policy.

Other ministries that are in some ways related to integration are the Ministry of Finance, which coordinates the allocation of funding for the issue area, and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, which works jointly with the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and with

⁸ Until 2009, the lead institution was the Office of the Minister of Ethnic Affairs, which was dissolved during the government austerity programme.

⁹ Recently, these ceremonies were transferred to the Ministry of the Interior.

¹⁰ Since the Soviet period, a separate schools networks has existed, teaching either in Estonian or in Russian. There have been various language immersion programmes in the schools with Russian as their tuition language and attempts to gradually transition to Estonian language tuition, but now a more strict policy is followed.

the Office of the President in charge of developing the ‘talent policy’ (dealing with highly skilled immigrants) currently being drafted.

2.2 Implementing Institutions

The Integration and Migration Foundation Our People (MISA) – a foundation created by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of the Interior. It is the main institution responsible for the implementation of integration strategies, more specifically, for: “instigating and supporting activities designed to achieve the integration of Estonian society among Estonians and non-Estonians; instigating and supporting activities associated with migration and immigration; and supporting the adaptation of non-Estonians into the cultural space of Estonia and their inclusion into active social life” (MISA 2010). It also functions as a grant distributor, outsourcing integration-related activities such as the organization of language tuition or support in particular settings (e.g. in summer camps, vocational schools, higher education institutions, NGOs, private schools, or in the kindergartens for the teachers), and prep courses on the constitution exam. It also gives grants for small developments and for journalists dealing with topics related to integration, finances minorities’ Sunday schools and cultural associations, funds the organization of topical conferences, creates informational materials and tutorials, and organises courses and seminars (e.g. on cooperation or management in a multi-cultural environment), excursions, and various other projects.

Innove – a foundation created by the Ministry of Education and Research. Organises citizenship and language exams and since 2013, also runs language immersion programs. Innove is also going to be the organiser of the adaptation program for the new migrants in 2015-2020.

The Police and Border Guard Board – (the Citizenship and Migration Office in particular) deals with incoming immigrants, provides information, and issues residence permits and citizenship.

The Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner – is an independent and impartial expert who monitors compliance with the requirements of the Gender Equality Act and Equal Treatment Act. Located in the Ministry of Social Affairs.

2.3 Policy Tools Supporting Integration

In general, there are **no measures that are strictly compulsory** for the immigrants. Integration is also deemed voluntary in the integration strategies. Exceptions include particular groups, such as people in the service sector (e.g. schools, hospitals, shops) who are sent to take language exams by the Language Inspectorate in cases of doubt about whether the person has sufficient proficiency in the Estonian language.

With the exception of the adaptation program, which is targeted only at new immigrants (i.e. people who go to apply for or renew their residence permit at the Police and Border Guard Board), there are practically no distinctions between migrant groups – **all groups are eligible for the same policy tools**. In other words, the new immigrants can participate in all integration activities – although occasionally the language barrier may be an obstacle, since many of the activities are targeted at the Russophone population but groups of new immigrants also include people who do not speak Russian but whose common language is English (IBS 2014).

As evident from above, many direct activities supporting integration are outsourced by Estonian state institutions, primarily via MISA. The following list outlines the policy tools that were implemented when the report was written and updated (in 2013 and first half of 2014). There are various kinds of policy tools currently being used or which have recently been put into use. Specific examples include language courses, integration through the educational system, exchange programs, integration through naturalisation, integration through the media sphere, the provision of financial incentives, and the protection of minority rights, including cultural autonomy.

- **Free language courses or reimbursement of language course fees** – Estonian language courses of different levels and foci are periodically organised by MISA. In addition, language learners can also apply for reimbursement of course fees from institutions of their choice in the event that they pass the respective-level exam.
- **Specialised language courses**, e.g. for students from higher education institutions, public sector workers, third sector workers. Includes mentoring programs to improve their professional performance.
- **Citizenship examination consultations** – informs immigrants about the content and organisation of the exams and also enables them to test their level of knowledge; organised by Innove.
- **Introductory adaptation programs for new immigrants** – an introductory course that consists of Estonian language-learning (to A2 or B1 level), lectures and trips that introduce life, culture and values in Estonian society, and gives information and assistance in practical matters. So far the courses have been voluntary, but according to the new policy legislated in the year 2013 amendments to the Aliens' Act – §121 of the Act states that “the Police and Border Guard Board refers the alien who has been granted a residence permit or a renewed residence permit to participate in the adaptation program.” The range and content of the program will be dictated by a decree by the Minister of the Interior (this has been drafted, consulted and is planned to be issued in August 2014).
- **Support for multi-cultural teaching** – courses are offered to vocational and middle-school teachers. These are designed to support integrated teaching of the subject matter and language and multi-cultural teaching in vocational schools. There are also counselling programs targeted at teachers which mostly follow the same goals. Also, respective tutorials and self-help materials have been compiled and seminars and conferences organised.
- **Vocational language tuition** – Estonian language courses that aim to prepare vocational students for the vocational exam and to induce participants' capability to compete in the labour market. Consists of learning aids. MISA also arranges courses for particular specialisations and schools.
- **Language immersion programs** – a variety of programs for different target groups. Exchange programs and language camps, Estonian subjects in schools with Russian language tuition for youth and children. By December 2012, 45 kindergartens and 35 schools had joined the language immersion program (see: http://www.meis.ee/newsletter?news_id=722 [Accessed 14 October 2014]).
- **Labour exchange programs** for the purpose of language immersion have been organised for grown-ups as well. The latter was a program that provides language immersion opportunities for persons who whose mother tongue is a language other than Estonian. Participants are sent to another institution in the same field for 2-4 weeks where they work in an Estonian environment. (e.g. local government officials from Ida-Virumaa, which is dominantly Russophone, spent 2-4 weeks at a local government institution in Pärnu).
- **Funding programs and story series on integration through media channels** – MISA funds various TV shows and story series in Russian language newspapers, radios and TV channels. These include for example, a weekly debate show “Direct speech” on different social, political and economic topics; “Live till you're 100” about the lives and times of longeval Estonians, a show “Let's go visit” about the different customs of hosting and cuisines of different nationalities, etc.
- **Supporting cultural associations and Sunday schools of ethnic minorities** – providing associations baseline funding according to the association attestation system, organising grants for minority cultural Sunday schools and encouraging intercultural cooperation projects. The goals are to ensure the cultural autonomy of minorities, ensure the opportunity to learn the minority's native language, and promote their ethnic culture in Estonia.
- **Naturalisation policies** – one exception for integration purposes worth mentioning here: a child under the age of 15 can get Estonian citizenship through a simplified procedure if at least one of their

parents has an undetermined citizenship and makes an application in the name of the child. In 2008, the Family Relations Office also launched an information campaign that repeatedly stressed that citizenship was automatically obtainable by such children. In addition, elderly people are granted an exemption from the written language examination, and only have to pass the oral part.

- **Anti-discrimination policies** – currently, these are regulated under the Equal Treatment Act and put into practice by the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner who provides counselling and opinions on possible cases of ethnic discrimination.

3. Engagement of Non-State Actors

A number of organisations devote themselves to minority issues. This is understandable, since many activities are delegated either by the ministries or by implementing agencies. However, not all institutions that engage in these policy implementations are NGOs – there are also for-profit service providers (e.g. companies who organise language courses or compile schooling materials) and municipal or public service providers (e.g. public schools that write project proposals and organise the activities called for e.g. by MISA).

A study on the adaptation of new immigrants concluded that one of the most important service providers is the employer. Many larger companies have specialised units that help their new recruits from abroad out with practical matters. Smaller companies outsource this to private firms. They offer a wide array of services from processing paperwork for residence permits to finding desired accommodation, schools for the client’s children, and shopping tips (IBS 2014).

Nor are all NGOs active in the issue area operated by migrants, or oriented exclusively at migrants. For instance, programs for developing civic values are also outsourced through MISA and are often carried out by organisations that do not strictly focus on migrants in particular. NGOs even seem to avoid a narrow focus on migrants. For example, an NGO called Open Republic (MTÜ Avatud Vabariik) manages projects on civic integration – which is run by young people with Russophone backgrounds who are also active spokespersons for integration – but nowhere in either the NGO statute or on their home page do they state explicitly that they deal with integration, minorities or migrants. (This is understandable if one takes into account the politicisation of the issue of ethnic relations and the stigmatisation of the issue of integration in some Russophone circles.) Another example is the Network of Estonian Non-Governmental Organisations (NENO), which is an umbrella organisation for associations operating in the public interest. NENO conducts some of their activities (e.g. NGO leadership school, communication activities) in Russian as well, aiming to function as a hub between Estonian and Russian civil society.

In addition to organisations financed by Estonian public authorities, there are also other NGO programs that finance activities such as equality and non-discrimination, human rights protection, access to services by unprivileged groups etc.

Some funds are also received by NGOs from the migrants’ countries of origin, most notably from Russia, but also from Finland (and its embassy in Tallinn) which supports Finnish NGOs, the Finnish schools (which also operate as NGOs) in Estonia, a Finnish congregation etc. However, there is less direct information about particular associations. The Russian embassy states that one of its goals is to implement the Russian compatriot policy and that its main focus is “to assist the consolidation of the Russian-compatriot public associations in Estonia with the aim of ensuring their legal rights and interests and preserving Russophone educational and cultural space” (Embassy of the Russian Federation). However, it is rather difficult to identify associations that receive support from the embassy – the information on the embassy’s home page only describes funding for an association’s Christmas party, the hosting of Russian artists and troupes, or the organization of field trips for children to Russia.

All in all, three main groups of associations can be distinguished. Below, a few examples are given about each group.

3.1 Cultural Associations

As Estonian integration policy is to an extent related to ethnic cultural autonomy, there are a number of cultural associations. For instance, the attestation list of associations that qualified for base financing from the Ministry of Culture in 2011 included 238 cultural minority associations that have converged into a dozen umbrella organizations (Ministry of Culture 2011). Almost all organisations in the Etnoweb list of umbrella organizations received annual baseline funding (between 10-25,000€ each) to promote their cultures in Estonian society, preserve their ethnic cultures, and acknowledge the multi-cultural nature of Estonia (MISA. National Culture Societies). It is difficult to say, to what extent these associations are orientated to new immigrants, although some organisations are founded or managed by new immigrants.

Etnoweb – a project-based initiative that created a web platform which aggregates information about different ethnic associations and lets them post news about related events etc. The main goal of this site was to induce the integration of the public spheres, which is also an Estonian integration-policy goal. The majority of the content is news about different ethnic folk-culture events (also in accordance with Estonian integration policy) and some events related to integration policy.

3.2 Political Minority Organisations

These initiatives usually pose some sort of opposition to government policy and are often mentioned in the Internal Security Services (the security police) yearbooks as potential threats to Estonia's internal security, which are financed by the various compatriot programs in Russia (this indicates the level of securitisation of the issue).

Often the legal formation of the organisation (or any details about the organisation at all – e.g. about funding) cannot be identified based on the information on their websites.

Russian School in Estonia – an NGO (initially) composed of parents of children in Russian schools. Opposes the compulsory transition to Estonian as the tuition language in Russian schools. Provides information and organises political events. No information about funding. The Internal Security Service yearbook suspects them of receiving funding (and instructions) from Russia. Its goals do not fully accord with Estonian integration policy goals.

Slavia.ee – a portal that combines news from a pro-Russian stance and also mediates various services, e.g. the Russian Ombudsman, which is described as a project initiated by Russian lawyers to protect the rights of Russophones in Estonia. The website provides no information about funding. The goals of the organization – creating a separate and a somewhat-biased public sphere – are in opposition to Estonian integration policy goals.

The House of Representatives of National Minorities of Estonia – an NGO founded on 30 April 2007 (four days after the displacement of the Bronze Soldier). It states numerous goals, including the representation and protection of the interests of national minorities and distributing European norms about ethnic relations. Its main current activity, however, is writing public letters about the interviews the President of the Republic of Estonia has given to the foreign media, and accusing him of distributing false information about the situation and history of Estonian national minorities. Each of these letters has gotten a response from the cabinet of the President which rules out the allegations and gives 'correct' information – who is right is impossible to find out, as none of the counterparts has attached originals of the interviews – including interviews given to the Moldovan or Swiss press for example. All in all, this NGO cannot be seen as conforming to the goals of the integration policy, as its

aim seems to be creating an opposition between Estonian state authorities and the Russophone population.

3.3 Service Providers

In general, separate service provision for minorities is rather uncommon. In most public-service provision institutions it is possible to receive service in Russian (or in English). The integration strategy 2008-2013 also used the “satisfaction of customers with a native tongue other than Estonian” as a measurement for the success of integration policy. However, there are some NGOs that also provide particular services that target ethnic minorities. For instance, there are two human rights organizations that could be broadly classified as pro-Estonian or pro-Russian, but which technically provide similar services.

The Johannes Mihkelson Centre is an NGO providing training and support in the field of labour and social affairs. At the time of this report’s writing, they had two projects running in the integration field: improving the reception conditions for asylum seekers and providing mentorship services for the integration of new immigrants. They are currently funded by the Ministry of the Interior and MISA. The NGO coordinates Estonian government policy implementation and thus is in accordance with the integration policy goals.

The Civil Training Centre is an NGO that has provided courses to very different audiences on various subjects including civic education, multi-cultural education, gender equality, returning to the labour market, etc. It has also organised preparatory courses for the constitution exam (to apply for Estonian citizenship) as well as adaptation courses for new immigrants, for which it receives funds through MISA.

The Legal Information Centre for Human Rights is an NGO providing legal aid to the Russophone population and immigrants in cases of human rights violations, discrimination etc. They are currently funded by Russian compatriot programs and by the Tallinn City Government, and formerly by the Russian embassy and the Foundation Russki Mir. On a rhetorical level, the Centre is in accordance with some of the Estonian integration policy goals, but the Estonian media suspects it of being a tool of Russian propaganda.

The Human Rights Centre is an NGO providing legal aid and promoting equal treatment. Their focus is mostly on asylum seekers, gender issues, and sexual minorities, but they also offer counselling to ethnic minorities. They receive funding from international organisations as well as NGO funding from the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of the Interior. Accords (although it is not directly related) with Estonian integration policy goals.

The Centre of Russian Culture is a municipal organisation that organises cultural events promoting Russian culture and cultural after-school activities for children. It also runs a people’s university, offering lectures and organising training for teachers who teach in Russian-language schools. The lectures are divided into two ‘faculties’: cultural studies, with lectures organized by Russian artists and art historians (e.g. about iconography, the tsars and their times) etc., and a ‘faculty’ of social studies that delivers lectures by Russian professors (but none affiliated with major universities in Estonia) on human rights law and its violations, Estonia’s economic situation, civic participation and politics affecting the country, the ‘Russian world’ and Russia’s international relations, or the role of national minorities in the restoration of Estonian independence. Teacher training is organised in cooperation with the St. Petersburg Postgraduate Academy of Pedagogical Education (Санкт-Петербургской академией постдипломного педагогического образования - СПбАППО). Interestingly, none of these courses are advertised on the home page in Estonian – there is only an ad about Estonian language courses for beginners (*sic*), which in turn is not advertised on the page in Russian. The Centre is funded by the Tallinn City Government and by Russian compatriot programs, and does not exactly conform with Estonian integration policy goals.

4. List of Relevant Bi- and Multilateral International Agreements

Estonia is a party to the major United Nations human rights conventions and has undertaken to work towards promotes human rights, democracy, and principles of the rule of law. Estonia has acceded to and implements, through integration measures. the following main conventions of international organisations:

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965) – acceded in 1991
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) – acceded in 1992
- Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995) – acceded in 1998
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) – acceded in 1992

5. Assessment on the Implementation of the Policy Framework

When comparing the policy tools used and the activities mentioned in the Estonian Integration Strategy 2008-2013, it may well be said that the policy framework has been implemented. The Strategy of Integration and Social Cohesion in Estonia 2020 is still in the course of development and thus cannot be assessed from an implementation perspective.

The rather poor preparation for accommodating and integrating new immigrants is also reflected in the limited accessibility of the services for this target group (and particularly for those immigrant groups who do not speak Russian) – many of them complain that the information about services etc. cannot be easily found, that they have had difficulties accessing services (e.g. through the Immigration office) in English, and that the language courses are designed primarily for Russophones, etc. (IISS 2013, IBS 2014). However, the Ministry of the Interior is planning to develop a new web-based platform that assembles all the relevant information and presents it in English. It also aims to develop services that would be suitable for the non-Russian speaking new migrants (Lüüs 2014).

However, as almost all current integration activities are voluntary, many do not have a very broad span. Some programs encompass only a couple of hundred or a couple of thousand people, although there are still tens of thousands who are not yet integrated. The policy frameworks are currently rather ambitious in scope (but not in scale), and expensive. In 2013, a total of 7,042,097 € was allocated for integration program implementation (Ministry of Culture 2012).

Another question is whether the policy framework actually enables the government to reach the goals that have been set. Many policy measures do not actually achieve the set goals – for instance, the money poured into minority cultural associations has not produced much visible output and remains somewhat of a facade. The language immersion programs are somewhat problematic in the North-Eastern region of Estonia (the county of Ida-Virumaa), where the vast majority of the population speaks Russian as their first language; thus there is not much of an opportunity to actually put the language into practice after the program has ended, etc. As yet there are no assessments of the economic impact of the integration program.

In general, however, there are some advances in the field of integration, according to the last Integration Monitoring from 2011. It indicates that contacts between the Estonian and the Russophone communities have become more frequent, the number of fully-integrated has grown, Russophones participate more often in civic associations, and the sense of belonging to the Estonian people (in the constitutional sense) has increased (Integration Monitoring 2011a and 2011b). Government institutions are also making advances towards developing policies and services with respect to new immigrants.

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