



National Focal Point of Estonia

# EEA Financial Mechanism STRATEGIC REPORT 2016

Strategic Report on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism  
2009–2014 in Estonia



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA  
MINISTRY OF FINANCE

## Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	3
2. ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECT OF THE GRANTS.....	4
2.1 Cohesion.....	11
2.1.1 Environment and climate change.....	11
2.1.2 Civil society.....	13
2.1.3 Research and scholarships .....	15
2.1.4 Cultural heritage and diversity.....	17
2.1.5 Human and social development.....	19
2.2 Bilateral relations .....	23
3. REPORTING ON PROGRAMMES .....	25
3.1 Overview of Programme status .....	25
3.2 Individual Programme summaries.....	25
3.2.1 Integrated Marine and Inland Water Management.....	25
3.2.2 Children and Youth at Risk .....	27
3.2.3 Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage .....	29
3.2.4 EEA and Norwegian-Estonian Scholarship Programme .....	31
4. MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION .....	33
4.1 Management and control systems .....	33
4.2 Compliance with EU legislation, national legislation, and the MoU .....	33
4.3 Audit, monitoring, review, and evaluation.....	35
4.4 Information and publicity .....	38
4.5 Work plan.....	39
5. SUMMARY LIST OF ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	40
6. ATTACHMENTS TO THE STRATEGIC REPORT .....	40

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overall objectives of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2009–2014 are to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area (EEA) and to strengthen bilateral relations between the donor states and the beneficiary states.

To achieve the overall objectives, the donor states – Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway – contribute 23 000 000 euros to Estonia, out of which 7,5% is assigned for donor states' management costs and the net amount available for Estonia is 21 275 000 euros.

During negotiations between the donor states and Estonia five programme areas were identified as most relevant in order to achieve the overall objectives. As a result of the negotiations, the total amount available was divided between the following programme areas: i) Integrated Marine and Inland Water Management; ii) Funds for Non-Governmental Organisations; iii) Children and Youth at Risk; iv) Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage; and v) Scholarships.

Since all the programmes were approved at the end of 2012, in 2013 the Programme Operators were engaged in launching the programmes, organising match-making events and other publicity events, and setting up and describing the management and control systems at the same time. The project promoters began implementation in 2013 for almost all programmes where predefined projects were foreseen in the programme agreement. Most of the planned calls for proposals were launched in 2013, and in several cases the grant decisions were also made. During 2014, the processes of launching calls and making grant decisions developed quickly and by the end of 2016 all the planned open calls were carried out.

All the programmes are in general progressing as expected and are expected to achieve all or most of the outcomes and outputs. Most of the projects were finished by the end on 2016, but as final reports are being analysed and there are some projects still going on the final results of all commitment rates will be available next year.

Out of four lasting programmes two will end on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2017 and two programmes on the 31<sup>th</sup> of December 2017. The focus from now on is on successful finishing of the programmes and if needed, making necessary adjustments to ensure maximum impact.

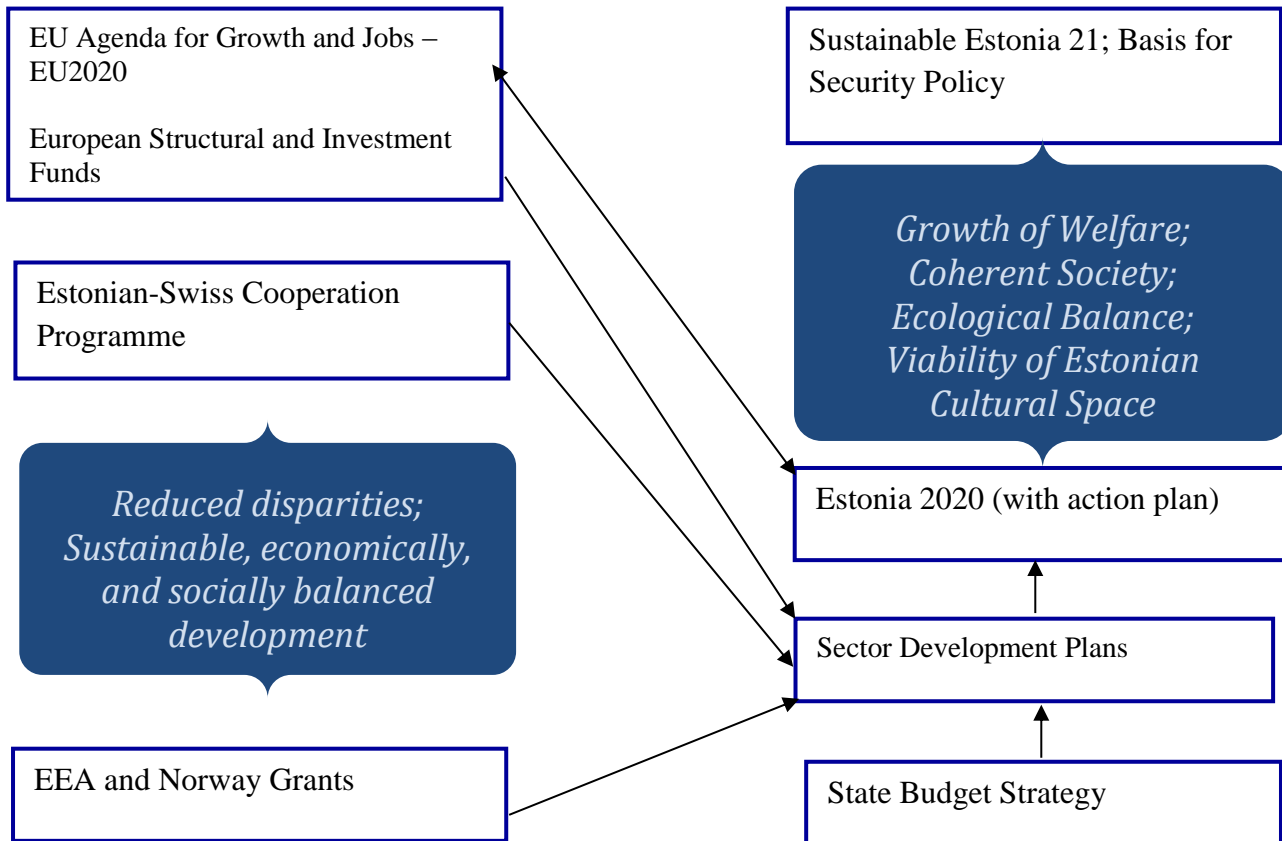
The Audit Authority carried out management and control system audits and audits on projects for five programmes, a short overview of the annual audit report is given.

Additionally, the report presents an assessment of how the programmes are expected to help address Estonian development needs in the respective priority sectors and contribute to long-term internal strategies such as Sustainable Estonia 21 or Competitiveness Plan Estonia 2020. This is supported by an overview of the most relevant macro indicators describing the social and economic situation and trends in Estonia.

## 2. ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECT OF THE GRANTS

The main goals of Estonia for the long term are increase in welfare, a cohesive society, ecological balance and viability of the Estonian cultural space<sup>1</sup>. The funding from the EEA and Norway Grants 2009–2014 with the objective to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area helps to address the Estonian development needs in specific priority sectors, which all contribute to longer term internal strategies such as Sustainable Estonia 21 or Competitiveness plan Estonia 2020.

### Strategic link



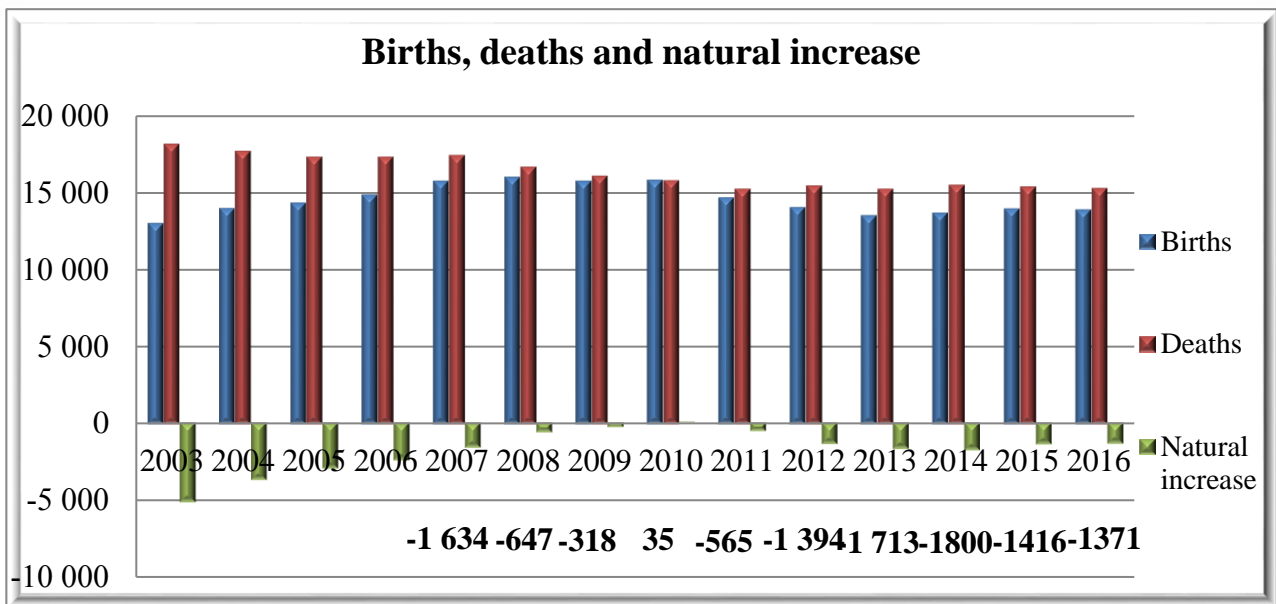
An important function of the EEA and Norway Grants has been the exchange of knowhow and best-practice in order to increase the effectiveness of activities in the priority fields and for the longer perspective enabling strengthened cooperation in the future.

EEA and Norway Grants financial contribution has made possible to address specific problems in the areas, which fall out of the eligibility scope of other funding but are still at great relevance considering the objective of sustainable, economically and socially balanced development and reduced disparities. Thus the support enabled to tackle the specific problems so that the overall development needs would be most effectively and efficiently covered, which means that the EEA and Norway Grants' contribution offers real added value. Although it is sometimes difficult to indicate the direct share in the higher indicator level reached, the systematic approach of cooperation and support allows us to believe that the funded programmes and implemented projects will lead to positive long-term impact.

<sup>1</sup> Sustainable Estonia 21.

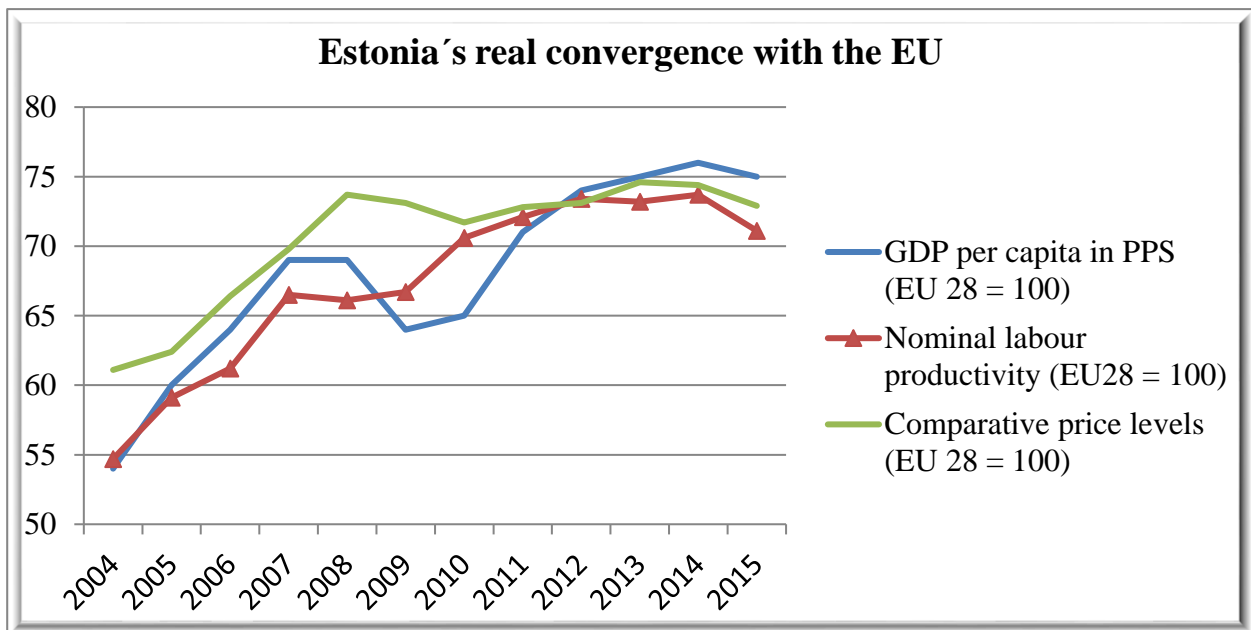
According to the initial estimates of Statistics Estonia, the population number in Estonia was 1 317 800 on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017, which is 1 850 persons more than at the same time a year ago.

The population decreased by 1,371 due to negative natural increase (the number of deaths exceeded the number of births) and increased by 3,220 due to positive net migration (more persons immigrated to Estonia than emigrated). In total, the population of Estonia increased by 0.14% in 2016. The population of Estonia has increased for two years already, because immigration has been higher than emigration and negative natural increase.



Source: Statistics Estonia

According to Statistics Estonia in 2016 the gross domestic product of Estonia increased by 1,6% compared to 2015, the GDP at current prices was 20,9 billion euros. The year was characterised by a slow but steady growth of the Estonian economy.



Source: Ministry of Finance, Eurostat<sup>234</sup>, compared to EU 28.

GDP per capita in comparison with the EU28 continues to be low - 75% in 2015 (EU28 being 100%; Norway 160%, Iceland 123%, Latvia 64%, Lithuania 75%), and the primary reason is relatively low productivity.

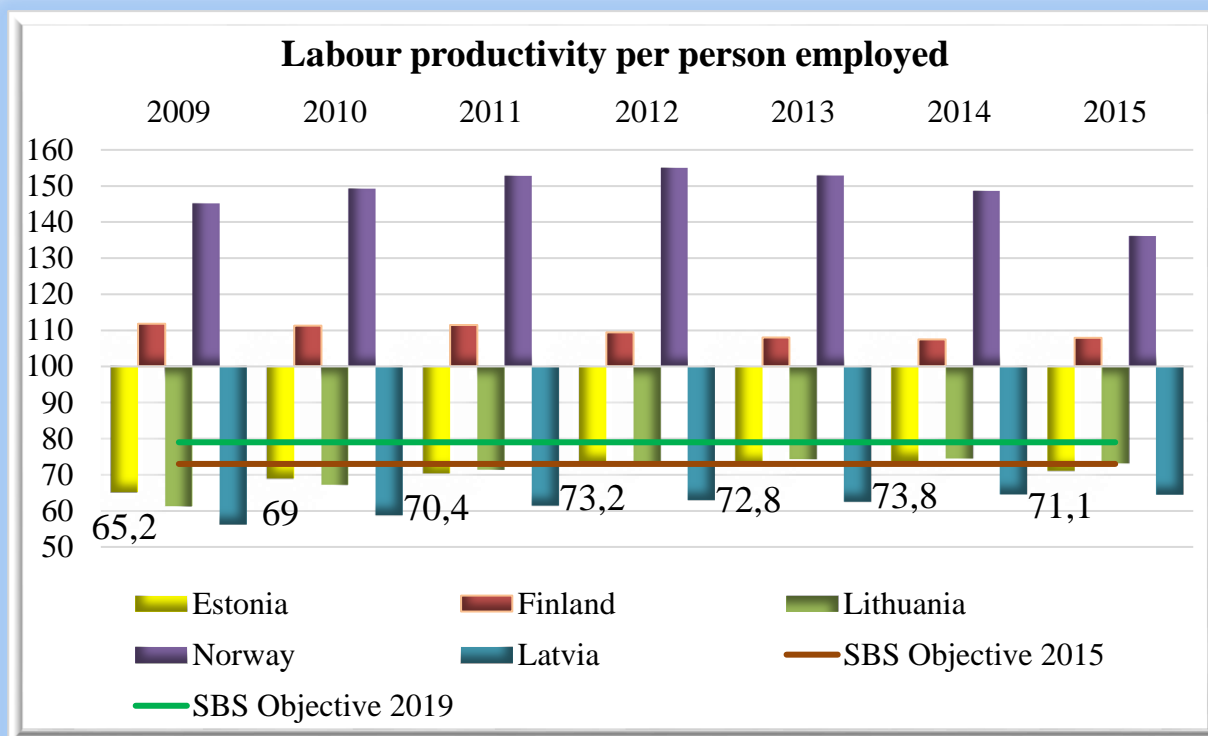
Increasing the productivity and innovation of the economy and moving towards more capital- and knowledge intensive economic model is one of the most important preconditions of achieving the growth of GDP per capita. For that purpose the Estonian Government has set the target to increase the productivity per person employed up to 73% of the EU average by 2015<sup>5</sup> and to 80% by 2020. By the end of 2015 level of productivity per person employed was lower than the year before - 71,1% (73,2% in 2012 and 72,8% in 2013, 73,8% in 2014), thus remained lower than the set target of reaching the EU average.

<sup>2</sup> <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tec00116>

<sup>3</sup> <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tec00120>

<sup>4</sup> <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tec00114>

<sup>5</sup> Estonia 2020



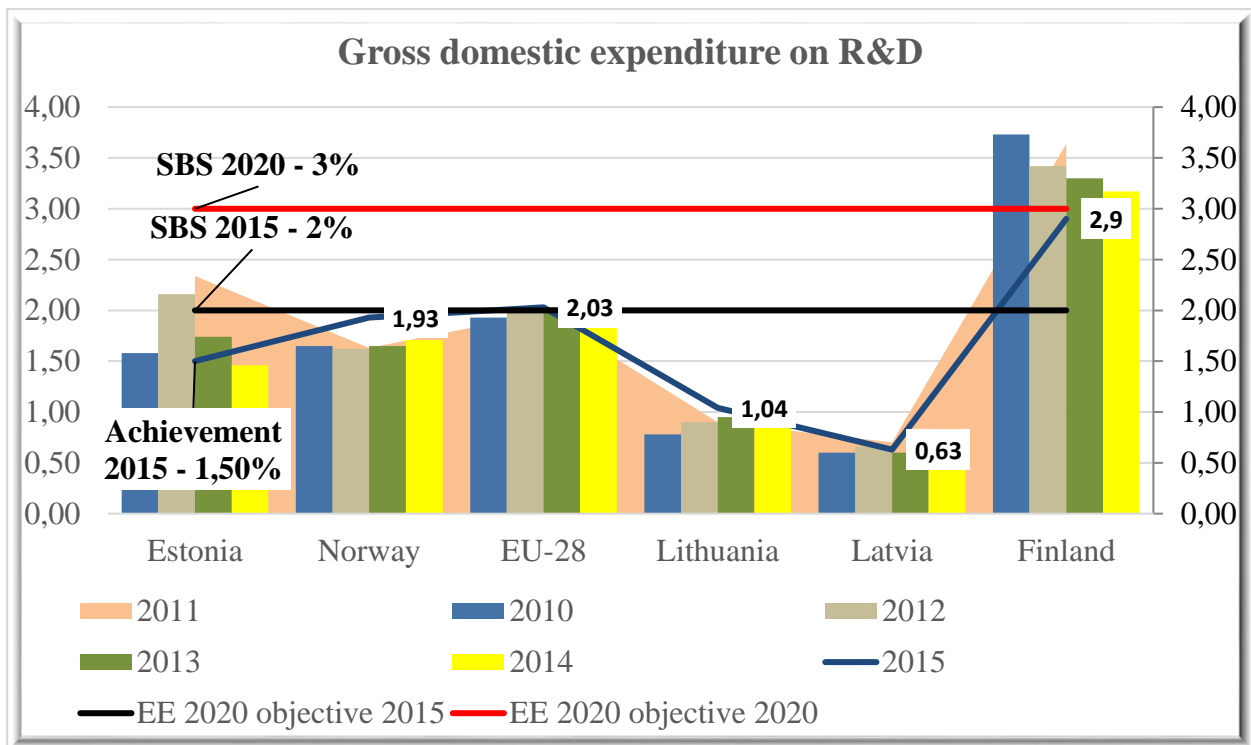
Source: Eurostat<sup>6</sup>

The gross domestic expenditure on R&D was 1,58% in 2010, 1,46% in 2014 and 1,50% in 2015, which is below the European Union average. Level of achievement being less than 2%, which was the objective for 2015, makes it somewhat hard to reach the target set for 2020, which is 3% of GDP.

Thus finding and participating in new areas of growth is of even greater importance as well as combining the research, development and innovations systems with the needs of the economy and moving up in the value chains.

This has been one of the focuses in the Entrepreneurship Growth Strategy for 2014–2020, where it has been pointed out that 44% of Estonian SMEs have carried out some product or process innovation, 34% have introduced changes in the area of marketing or management and around one third of them have managed to implement those improvements without any external help. However, innovative entrepreneurs in Estonia are still behind their European partners when it comes to the growth of turnover based on new products and services. Therefore a rather paradoxical situation has appeared where there are more innovative companies in Estonia than the EU average but the turnover of new products in Estonia is considerably smaller.

<sup>6</sup> <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tec00116>



Source: Eurostat<sup>7</sup>

In this context the inputs of the EEA and Norway Grants’ research and scholarships programmes’ as well as of the Green Industry Innovation programme focusing on green ICT are seen as valuable contribution to and in synergy with EU funding under the specific objective “R&D and higher education are of a high level, and Estonia is active and visible in international cooperation in the field of RD&I” given in the Operational Programme of 2014–2020 period, addresses one of the most essential development needs of increasing innovation capacity and competitiveness.

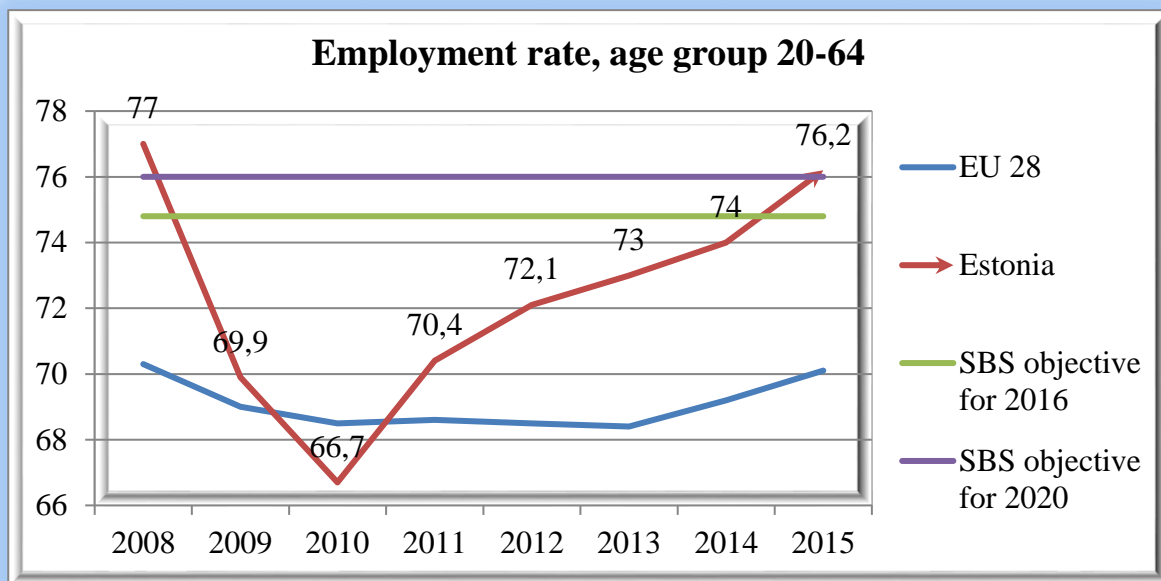
Finding new growth models and a knowledge-based economy also help to address other challenges, such as the ageing population and limited availability of natural resources.

Estonia has set a target of achieving a 76% employment rate in the 20-64 age group by 2020, this objective was achieved by the end of 2015 when the level of employment reached 76,2%. The level of employment started to recover rapidly in 2011; in 2012 the employment rate in the 20-64 age group increased reaching the level of 72,1%<sup>8</sup>, 73% by 2013, 74% by 2014 and 76,2% by 2015.

<sup>7</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=t2020\\_20](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=t2020_20)

<sup>8</sup> [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=t2020\\_10](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=t2020_10)





Source: Eurostat<sup>9</sup> and Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia

This positive trend of raising employment rate is partially explained by compulsory registration of employees since July 2014. In coming years labour market developments are also strongly affected by Work Ability Reform, which implementation started in 2016 and helps people, with partial work ability to return to the labour market. It is assumed though that remained skills of people, who are being activated by the reform, are not in line with the labour market needs and employers' capability to hire such people is low, resulting in increasing unemployment as of 2017. Positive effects from the Work Ability Reform via increased labour supply are expected to gradually increase in time. This and other activation measures addressed to each age group are prerequisite to cope with the shrinkage of working age population. As the number of people in employment is expected to stop growing due to demographic developments and start declining after 2017, then in the next years economic growth can only be driven by productivity and investments supporting it.

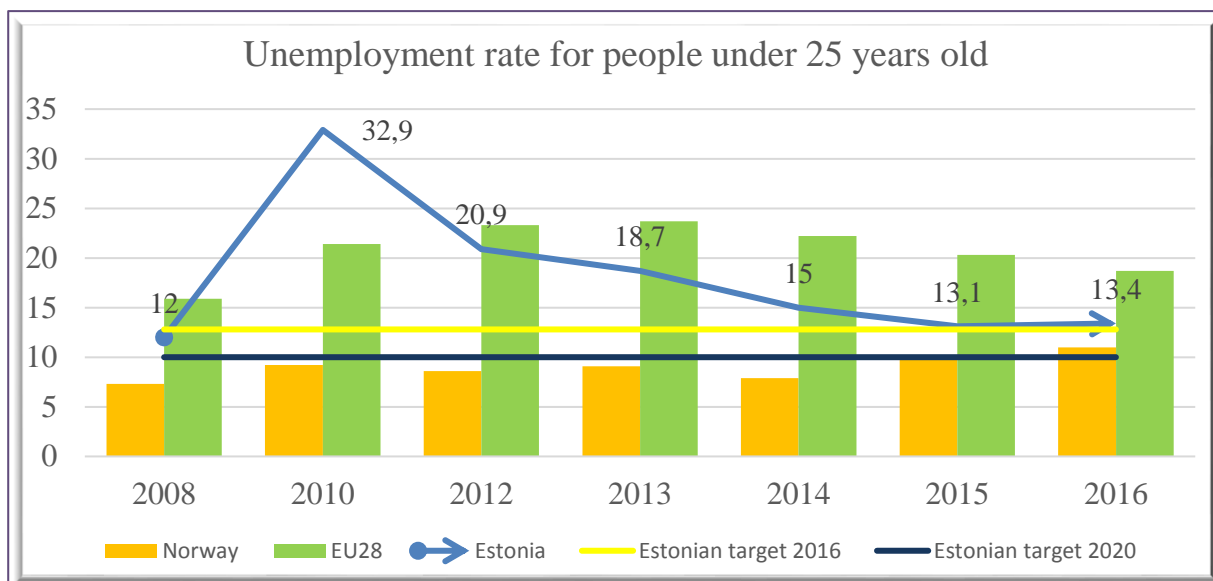
Unemployment increased slightly during 2016 to 6,8% in the 15-74 age group after slight but continuous decrease during the previous years (10,2%<sup>10</sup> in 2012, 8,6% in 2013, 7,4% in 2014 and 6,2% in 2015).

Reducing youth (age group 15-24 years) unemployment remains an important challenge for Estonia. In 2015 compared to 2014, the unemployment rate dropped considerably among young people, being 13,1% (15% in 2014) but increased again slightly during 2016 to 13,4% remaining still higher than other age groups, that still shows that entering the labour market and staying there is still a serious problem for the young. Estonia is committed to decreasing the unemployment rate of young people to 10% by 2020.

The Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Social Affairs have developed special employment and education measures for youth, which support and prepare for transitions between the education system and labour market. These efforts are supported with the activities under the programme Children and Youth at Risk.

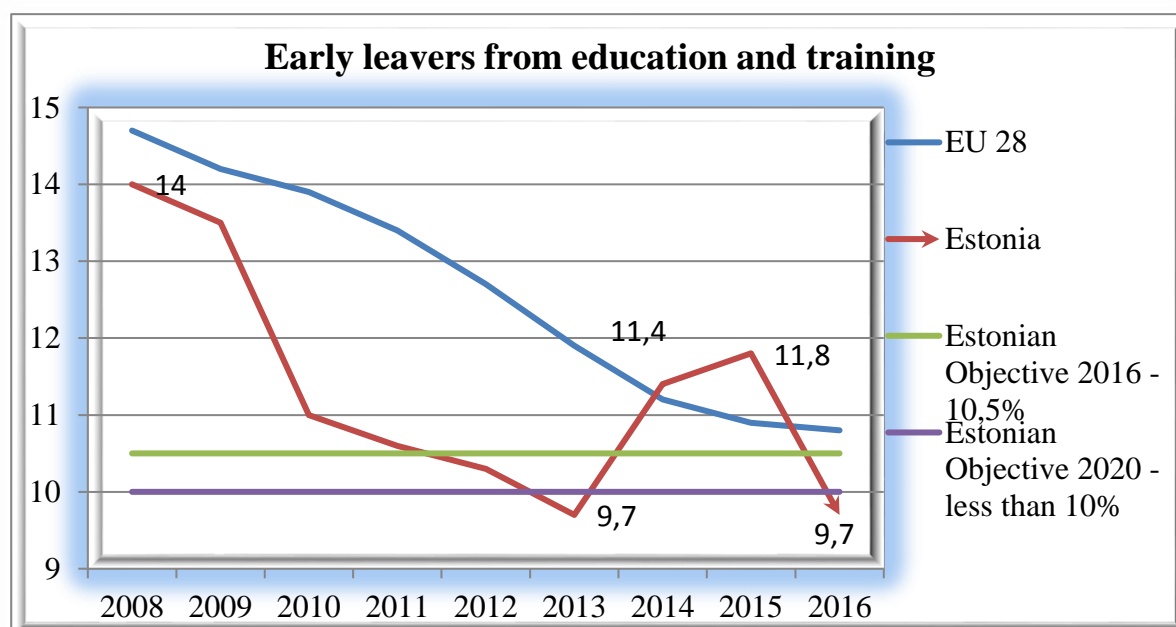
<sup>9</sup> [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=t2020\\_10](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=t2020_10)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.stat.ee/66661>



Source: Eurostat<sup>11</sup> and Statistics Estonia

Namely through the programme Children and Youth at Risk addressing child welfare, professionals in different agencies are supported in order to provide adequate early intervention and provision of evidence and knowledge-based interventions to support parenting skills and prevent juvenile delinquency. Preventing or minimising negative consequences and reducing the costs of juvenile offending, developing social competences and cohesion in society contribute to achievement of the objectives of the EEA and Norway Grants and move towards socially balanced development. Activities under the programme also contribute directly to the aim to reduce the youth unemployment rate as well as the Europe 2020 goal to reduce the percentage of early school leavers.



Source: Eurostat<sup>12</sup>

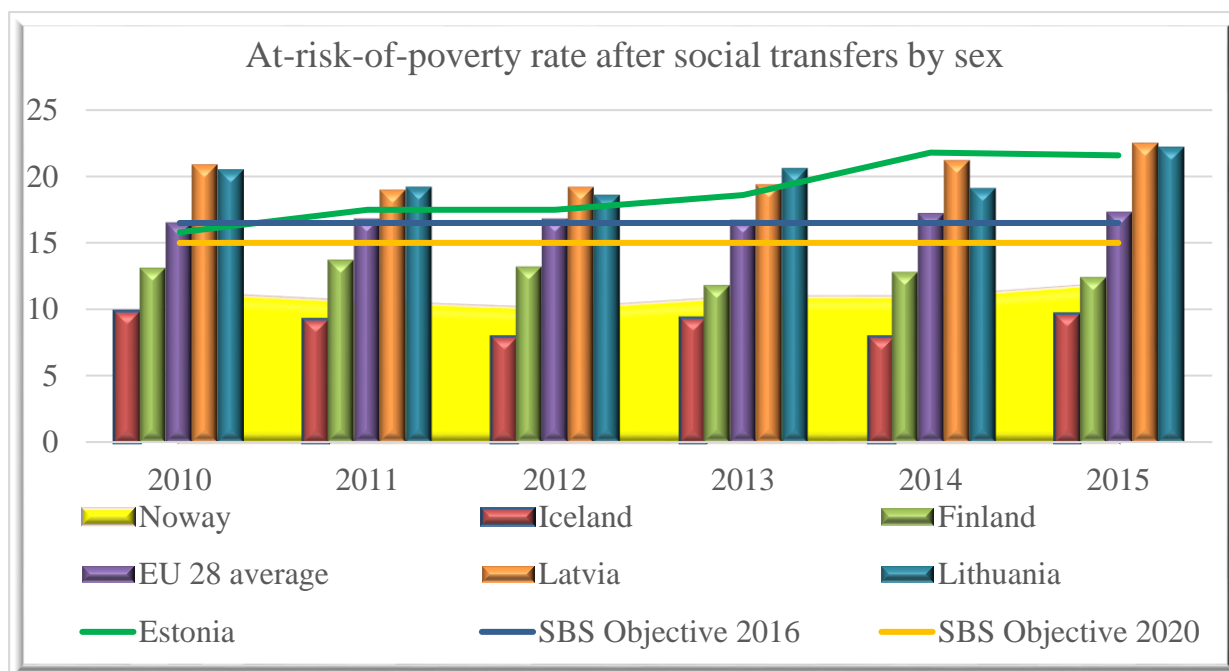
<sup>11</sup> [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=une\\_rt\\_a&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=une_rt_a&lang=en)

<sup>12</sup> <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tsdsc410>

Reduction of poverty and the problems accompanying it are among the priorities of the Government's action programme. The goal of the Government is to reduce the amount of absolute poverty to 5.9% by 2019. Special attention is paid to the reduction of poverty among children, and the related goal was to reduce absolute poverty among children aged 0-17 to 7% before 2019. Reducing social inequality and poverty as well as increasing gender equality and social inclusion, are the targets of the Government's Welfare Development Plan 2016-2023.

According to Statistics Estonia, in 2015 21,3 % (21,6% in 2014, 22,1% in 2013, and 18,6% in 2012) of the Estonian population lived in relative poverty and 3,9% (6,3% in 2014, 8,0% in 2013 and 7,3% in 2012) in absolute poverty. In 2015<sup>13</sup>, 18,5% of children under 18 lived in relative poverty or one and a half percentage points less compared to the previous year, while the absolute poverty rate of children has decreased (10% in 2013, 9% in 2014 and 4,6 in 2015).

The level of education significantly affects the risk of falling into poverty. Among persons with basic or lower education in every third was in the poorest and only every fourteenth in the richest income quintile. At the same time, one-third of people with higher education belonged to the richest fifth.



Source: Eurostat and Estonian Statistics

## 2.1 Cohesion

### 2.1.1 Environment and climate change

The priority sector includes one programme – Integrated Marine and Inland Water Management. With this programme there are clear connections and a valuable contribution to the objectives of the Estonian Environmental Strategy (EES2030). EES2030 is a strategy for developing the sphere

<sup>13</sup> 2016 data will be available end 2017.

of the environment which builds upon the principles of the National Strategy on Sustainable Development "Sustainable Estonia 21" and serves as the basis for the preparation and revision of all sector-specific development plans within the sphere of the environment.

#### a) Contextual Trends

The environmental challenges of the future are to secure a low-carbon, resource-constrained world while preventing environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and unsustainable use of resources among others water pollution, which is the central subject under current programme. The limitation of the resources is an initiator for more environmentally effective, scientifically sound and long-term valid solutions which are integrated not only to environmental policies but also with decisions in other sectors.

The target of the Government is to improve the condition of waters. The goal of supporting the development of water management and monitoring is to guarantee quality drinking water and waste water collection and treatment, which in turn helps to improve the situation of the Estonian water bodies and the Baltic Sea.

One of the specific objectives of the Estonian Environmental Strategy is to improve the status of surface water (including coastal waters) and groundwater (to achieve the "good" status) and to maintain the status of water bodies that already have "good" or "high" status.

This objective is in line with Estonia's obligations deriving from EU marine and inland water legislation, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan 2021.

Despite the extensive investments made so far, Estonia remains unable to comply fully with the requirements that arise from the Water Framework Directive, the Drinking Water and Urban Wastewater Treatment Directives, and the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, and to provide residents with drinking water compliant with requirements and ensure the collection and treatment of wastewater.

In Estonia 57% (2015) of surface water and 79% of groundwater is in good or very good condition. In the Water Management Plans approved by the Government it is aimed that by the end of 2021 in Estonia 81% of surface water bodies and 84% of groundwater bodies are at least in good condition. Therefore specific measures are foreseen in these plans, precondition for effective implementation is that proper monitoring system must be further developed.

#### b) EEA Grants' contribution

The desired state of Estonian ecological balance by the year 2030 is a stable and knowledge-based management of our environment. This includes among other things cross-usable national registers of natural resources, organized statistics, integrated planning which takes place based on careful consideration of environmental balance in every sphere of life. The funding from the EEA Grants for the programme contributes directly to the achievement of the abovementioned long term goal.

Due to the gap in supporting activities that contribute to managing marine and water related problems in an integrated manner the contribution of EEA Grants and experience of the Norwegian Environment Agency as the Donor Programme Partner are of great importance.

During the programme INSPIRE services were developed and data that Land Board is managing

was converted to INSPIRE data model. Before the project there were 6 databases in form of INSPIRE and during the implementation period 8 more were added. The land cover data was updated in Hiiu, Saare, Viru and Viljandi, which makes 19% of Estonian land cover information. All Estonian data is available in the INSPIRE geoportal <http://inspire-geoportal.ec.europa.eu/>.

Under the programme data-modelling system and decision support tool for the integrated marine and inland water management was developed. The system enables getting precise information on the status of marine and inland water.

Very significant contribution in the adaptation to the climate change has been done during the period 2013-2016 in Estonia. The climate change risk and vulnerability assessment and cost-effectiveness assessment for adaptation measures in the most vulnerable sectors are reached and the national climate change adaptation strategy „Development Plan for Climate Change Adaptation until 2030“ and the implementation plan with it are developed. The predefined project “Development of Estonian climate change adaptation strategy and measures” contributed to a more climate-resilient Estonia and this was the first time when Estonia developed the coherent approach in adapting to climate change field and assembled all the available knowledge about different impacts caused by climate change in our region.

Under the programme marine and inland water researches and studies were conducted. Significant amount of new information about marine habitats location and status were collected. Monitoring and assessment methods for marine and coastal habitat types as well as for ringed seals were worked out. Methods for assessment and mapping of ecosystem services of marine and inland waters were developed, and restoration work of two river habitats (including only location of Freshwater pearl mussel habitat in Estonia) were carried out.

### **2.1.2 Civil society**

The priority sector contains one programme: Fund for Non-governmental Organisations

#### **a) Contextual Trends**

Increasing the coherence of society and the inclusion of people from different language and cultural backgrounds in the society is becoming increasingly important from the perspective of stability, economic growth and well-being.

Estonian society is diverse both culturally and in terms of legal status: Estonia is home to 180 ethnic groups other than Estonians; they constitute about 31% of the total population. Being more specific, according to Statistics Estonia in 2016<sup>14</sup> there were 79 876 persons living in Estonia with other than Estonian or Russian nationality and 11754 among them whose nationality is unknown.

The number of new immigrants, i.e. refugees, returnees, foreign workers and foreign students is growing and these people need support to adjust to society and to enter the labour market. It is also important that the Estonian society and citizens show tolerance to those groups, which requires improved communication measures.

The Government has adopted the “Civil Society Development Plan 2015–2020”, which aims at the promotion of civil society in 2015–2020. The plan focuses on two priorities: socially active residents and acting capabilities of citizens’ associations, i.e. ensuring that citizens’ associations

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<sup>14</sup> Latest update 10.06.2016

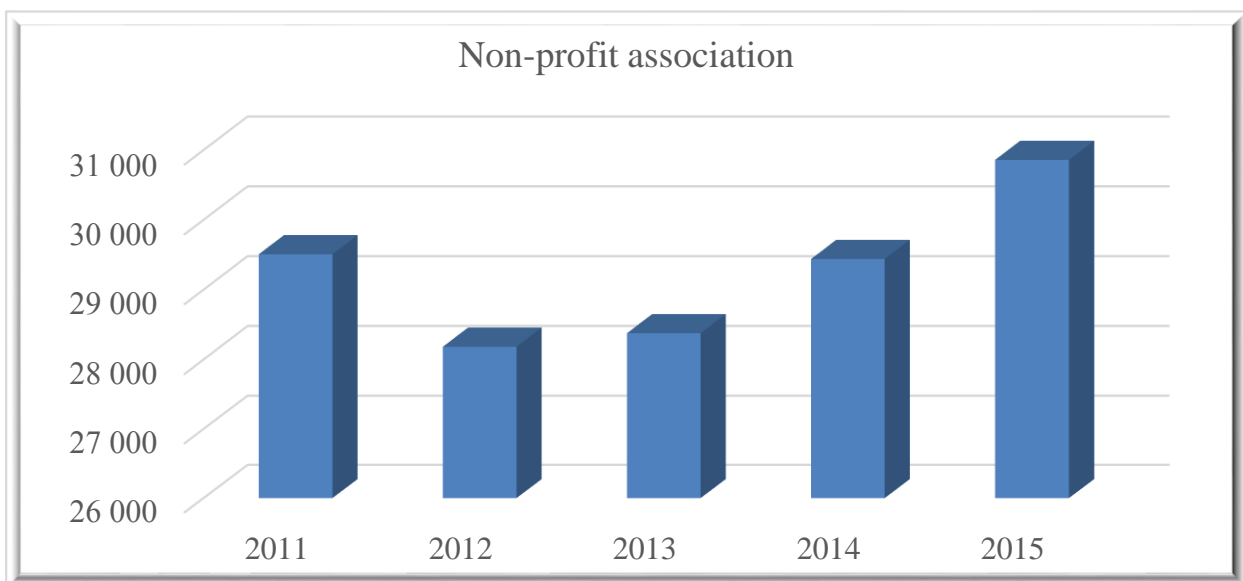
have sufficient possibilities for achievement of their goals. The development plan establishes the goal of participation of citizens' associations in the formation of policy as a natural valued cooperation. It is also important to increase the influence of citizens' associations in the process of dealing with social problems and improvement of well-being of people through social innovation, social entrepreneurship and provision of public services.

A participatory democracy website has been set up at [www.osale.ee](http://www.osale.ee) to allow people to take part in government matters and be an active member of civil society. The purpose of the participatory democracy website is to include Estonian civil associations and inhabitants in active participation in dialogue on matters of importance to society.

The participatory website may be used to submit proposals to the government. Relevant, well-grounded opinions and proposals are welcomed, as is criticism regarding aspects that should be changed in the country and ideas as to how to accomplish this.

Estonian NGOs are active in all possible fields: most in sport and culture, many in social services, health and environment, equal number in civic rights, education and local development, fewer in philanthropy, policy analysis, etc. Quite many are functioning as business and professional associations.

The number of non-profit associations increased by 1420 in 2015.<sup>15</sup>



Source: Statistics Estonia<sup>16</sup>

Citizens' associations have gained power and skills, which have increased their capacity to earn income, provide public and societal services, start up social enterprises, etc. Citizens' associations that participate in shaping politics increasingly feel their significant role in finding the best solutions to the challenges that the society is facing and in improving the preparation procedures and the quality of legislation and policy documents.

<sup>15</sup> Data of Statistics Estonia

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.stat.ee/68778>

## b) The contribution of EEA Grants

The programme supported projects initiated to promote democratic values, including human rights, for developing advocacy and a watchdog role, and small capacity-building projects. Special attention was paid to multicultural dialogue and the integration of national minorities, as well as strengthening the capacity of NGOs developing social services, with the focus on activities targeting children and youth.

There is great potential for resolving the problems of Estonian society through the contribution from NGOs. Taking on the best practices of Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein provided an opportunity to further develop NGO capacity-building and spread their activity in an influential way. The programme has contributed considerably in building the capacity of Estonian NGOs.

### **2.1.3 Research and scholarships**

The priority sector includes one programme – the Scholarship programme. This programme is implemented in cooperation with the Norwegian-Estonian Research Cooperation programme and the Scholarship programme financed from the Norway Grants.

#### a) Contextual Trends

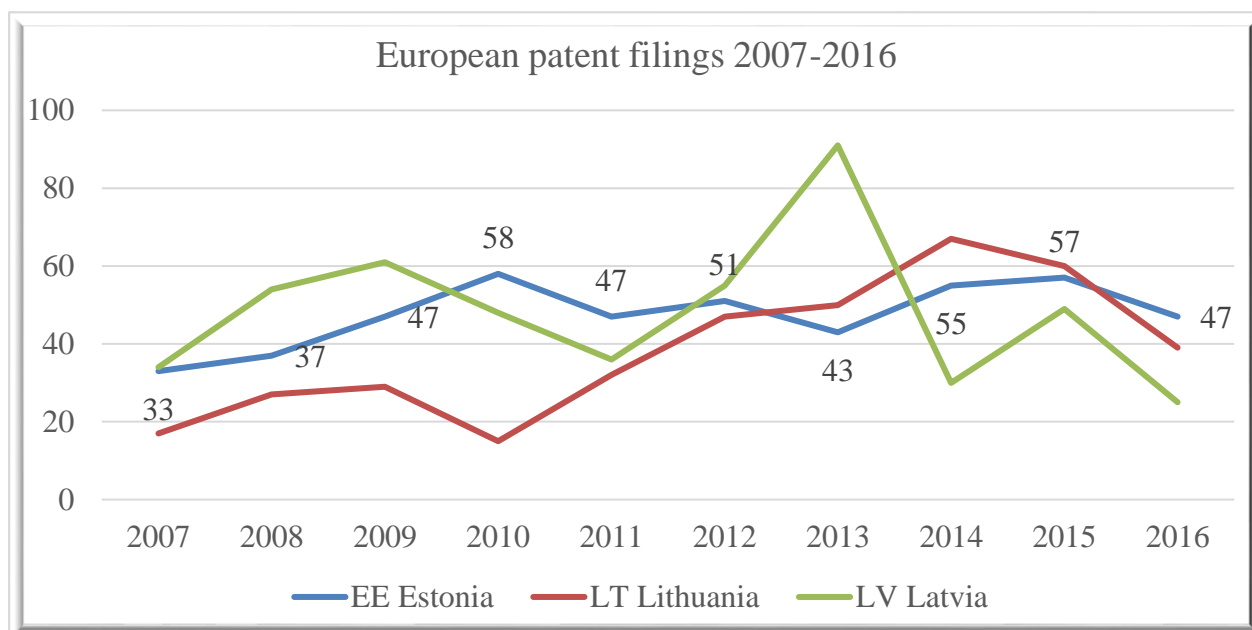
Finding new sources of growth, making economy more knowledge-intensive and increasing the impact of Estonian science are according to analyses made at the end of 2011 Estonia's essential development needs in the 10 years perspective. R&D and more generally the higher education system are key elements to achieve structural changes in the economy and the wise positioning of Estonia in the international division of work.

Thus the objective written into the National Reform Programme "Estonia 2020" is to create preconditions for increasing the volumes of research and development in the private sector and raising the number and quality of innovation outputs.

Public sector R&D capability, including the placement of our universities in international ranking lists as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of R&D, play a key role in companies' research and development capability. The academic activity is a key connecting link between domestic and international networking of people and knowledge, which is one source for raising the innovation capacity of companies and attaining higher value added. In future, R&D&I will depend more on developments in other European countries and on Estonia's capacity to contribute to international cooperation. Economic growth, employment and social well-being increasingly depend on the interaction and substantial cooperation between higher educational institutions science communities and businesses.

Estonia 2020 sets the target of raising the level of investment in R&D to 2% of GDP by the end of 2015 and to 3% by the end of 2020 (achievement level – 2,19% in 2012, 1,74% in 2013, 1,46% in 2014 and 1,50% in 2015) and ensuring that the increase in labour costs does not significantly exceed the growth rate of productivity. The aim is to support the development of growth-capable sectors selected using the smart specialisation methodology and to support cooperation between enterprises and research institutions.

Country Specific analysis 2016 under European Semester include finding that only limited number of companies collaborate with research institutions, resulting in a low level on patent applications. There were 57 patent filings by Estonian companies in 2015 and even less in 2016 – 47.



Source: European Patent Office<sup>17</sup>

Ministry of Education and Research has the objective of raising the level of internationalisation of research and education, among other in the “The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020” the objective is to reach by 2020 the students mobility to 10%, being 3,5% in 2014, 1,4% in 2015 and 1,8% in 2016.

#### b) The contribution of EEA Grants

Enhanced human capital and knowledge base through transnational cooperation is the objective of the scholarship programme in Estonia. The chosen measures will encourage more active student and staff mobility, and an increased and strengthened cooperation between secondary education institutions. The programme contributes directly to the objectives of the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy for 2014–2020, which turns special attention to moving towards a development- and cooperation-based approach to the study, skills, and knowledge of teachers and academic staff, and strengthening the connection between education and a knowledge-based society and innovative economy.

In previous years, student mobility between the higher education institutions of Estonia and Norway has been rather inactive. There are several explanations, but one of the main barriers to use of the Erasmus scholarship for studying in Norway is the rather low level of Erasmus grants and lack of personal co-funding; the cost of living index in Estonia differs from that of the Nordic countries. Thus the programme contributed to increased higher education student and staff mobility between Estonia and Norway and has opened up new opportunities to gain valuable experience through cooperation.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.epo.org/about-us/annual-reports-statistics/statistics.html#filings>



Relating to the number of mobile staff in cooperation projects the mobility of 90 teachers and 37 administrative staff was reported in 2016 and the total targets of two indicators were remarkably exceeded. During the whole period there were 191 teachers and 60 administrative staff benefiting from the programme.

10 Cooperation Projects at Upper Secondary Level contributed to the increased and strengthened institutional cooperation between Beneficiary and EEA EFTA States. According to the reports of cooperation projects the mutual knowledge and understanding between partner schools is increased through smooth cooperation, shared outcomes and staff visits.

The topics of cooperation projects cover areas such as sustainability, natural sciences, mathematics, healthy lifestyles, finding new ways to face technological challenges, etc. The projects provided 11 joint products and services as a result of the cooperation and strengthened bilateral relations at the institutional and country level.

For example output of one project “Practical mathematics in technical education and other fields” implemented by Pärnumaa Vocational Education Centre in cooperation with NGO Skills Estonia and Breidholt College (Iceland) focused on teaching mathematics in an innovative and creative way. As a result of the project learning materials (both e-materials and paper textbooks) were developed to help students better understand and use mathematics, especially geometrics. The materials include texts, practical tasks and exercises and learning videos. Considering the fact that one of the objectives of The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 is to increase the share of tertiary graduates in Mathematics, Science and Technology as a percentage of all tertiary graduates has this project valuable input to the objective.

Evaluation of the programme, carried out in 2016 shows that EEA/Norway grants scholarship programme is one of the most valuable scholarship programmes for increasing mobility and bilateral relations between Estonia-Iceland and Estonia-Norway. The programme enabled to create new and to strengthen old partnerships, gave a possibility to exchange experiences, increase knowledge in specific fields, create new ideas for projects and articles. According to the evaluation the effectiveness of the implementation of EEA/Norway grants scholarship programme has been high and initial objectives have been achieved.

#### **2.1.4 Cultural heritage and diversity**

The priority sector contains one programme: Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage.

##### **a) Contextual Trends**

Cultural heritage is an important part of Estonian history and it acts as a source of identity for each individual as well as for the state. The main shortcoming of the heritage conservation field is that there is a considerable discrepancy in the extent of obligations of the owners of heritage objects and the obligations of the state in ensuring the conservation of monuments. Therefore heritage protection reform is being prepared, which aim is the long-term preservation of the key parts of Estonian culture. The Ministry of Culture plans to enforce the Heritage Conservation Act in 2019. The implementation of the reform will guarantee a better balance between the rights and obligations of owners of heritage sites, creating a new support mechanism; will increase the administrative and counselling capacities of the National Heritage Board and connects the study, presentation and preservation of the heritage in museums and in heritage protection areas.

The manors are an important cultural heritage in Estonia. The network of schools in the former mansions of nobility is a peculiarity of Estonia and Latvia, and reflects the educational and social history of Estonia since the 1920s. The manor complexes in themselves serve as a study environment of history of culture, art and architecture, and, of course, of political and economic history. Over 50 of the 227 local government units have a manor-school within their territory and approximately every 5th primary school in the Estonian countryside is located in an old manor house.

At the beginning of the programme there were 59 schools and orphanages in old manor houses. By now more rural schools have become more active identifying themselves as manor schools, the number of the manor schools has grown to 69. This rise reflects the growing positive image of this type of school and the importance of heritage as a driver of local life. Also many privately owned manors that operate as training centres have cooperated in the activities of the programme. Many of them represent the best examples of architectural heritage, and a large number of them are under state protection.

69 manor schools together have approximately 230 buildings in their territory. 20 of the total number of schools were considered as restored and meet the criteria of modern educational requirements before the start of the programme. Among these are also nine manor schools in five Estonian counties which restoration was supported from EEA and Norway Grants during the implementation period of 2004–2009. Altogether 26 schools out of 69 i.e. 37% of potential applicants applied for the grants in 2013. In the training and branding activities of the pre-defined project 60% of the schools actively participated.

The existence of manor houses as schools, with their friendly environment enabling the personal development approach to the child in education, is a very strong argument for young families when choosing where to live and raise children, and thus supporting balanced regional development.

In addition restoring the manor houses has much broader added value since they have a social tendency: to develop local cultural identity; to encourage local people to participate in and to increase their knowledge about the value of cultural heritage; to promote local economic life through cultural heritage; and to create new partnership relations between different communities and on an international level.

#### b) The contribution of EEA Grants

Key activities of the cultural heritage programme in Estonia include the preservation and revitalisation of manor houses operating as schools. Through the implementation of the restoration activities, the learning environment of Estonian schoolchildren is enhanced and the manors meet European standards.

The impact is on the one hand the pure fact that the manor schools are restored and protected, which is crucial, considering that more than 2/3 of the manor school buildings are listed as architectural monuments. 9 manor schools were restored during the period 2004–2009. Under present programme 4 manor schools were restored and in addition also 4 development projects included some restoration activities that enabled to take into use the manor outbuildings that had been abandoned for years. By the end of the programme 28 manor buildings were restored, which is more than the initially planned 20.

The restoration of 4 schools – Suuremõisa, Vääna, Koeru Aruküla and Illuka guaranteed the further existence of the schools in these buildings, the preservation of jobs and stopped the emigration. Instead, these communities, especially Vääna, have attracted new habitants. Pikavere School faced before the possibility to be closed as school. Profitable and well-focused nature trail as well as hobby classes and cafeteria facilities created through the project gave the school the new breathing and the building of the school will be further improved by the municipality.

The study by CIVITTA Eesti proved that restoration projects i.e. improvement of manor school buildings had significant impact on education in the region.

Education related additional activities in manor schools also supported teachers' confidence and motivation to stay in the rural area. For example Kiltsi generated a thorough exhibition on world explorer Adam Johan von Krusenstern. The latter was the inspiration to create special study tours under predefined project to market the manor schools as study tour destinations for other schools.

The additional value added gained is through the study possibilities for students of restoration at the Estonian Academy of Art, Tartu Art College, and Hiiumaa Vocational School, supporting the continuity of professionalism, as large restoration investments into public premises are quite rare.

The main focus of the development projects was on community involvement, creation and supporting of new activities to open the manors to the community and visitors as local cultural centres. In most of the cases a significant number of community members were involved in the implementation of the project, a variety of new activities that contribute to community development, job creation and thus enabling also schools sustainability were developed.

The projects have been promoted in local communities and national media and received a lot of attention. The comprehensive web page created as a part of the programme is serving as main information channel ([www.moisakoolid.ee](http://www.moisakoolid.ee)). The website includes the materials of predefined projects, information on manor schools including tourism information on the manors and surroundings, etc. The visits to website per month have since August 2016 been always higher than 3000 and grown to more than 3600 in January and February 2017. Extraordinary high number of visitors 5152 was in December 2016. Webpage is available both in Estonian and in English.

### **2.1.5 Human and social development**

The priority area contains one programme – Children and Youth at Risk.

#### **a) Contextual Trends**

Social cohesion indicators in Estonia are considerably lower than in Northern and Western Europe. Social inequality is evident in the low status of social groups like disabled people, the elderly, ethnic minorities and limited involvement in community life. It is important to guarantee that Estonian society is tolerant and that the principles of equal treatment are adhered to.

As of 2015, the Estonian Human Development Index is ranked 30, in 2013 it was 33<sup>rd</sup> according to the Human Development Report Office.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/hdi>

Achievement of indicators	Achievement					Target for 2015	Target for 2020
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		
Rate of relative poverty after social transfers, %	17,5	18,6	22,10	21,6	21,3	16,5	15
Employment rate in the 20-64 age group, %	70,4	72,1	73,30	74	76,2	73,4	76
Youth unemployment rate in the 15-24 age group, % <sup>19</sup>	22,4	20,9	18,70	15	13,1 (13,4 in 2016)	15	10
Long-term unemployment rate, %	7,1	5,5	3,80	3,3	2,4 (2,1 in 2016)	3,6	2,5

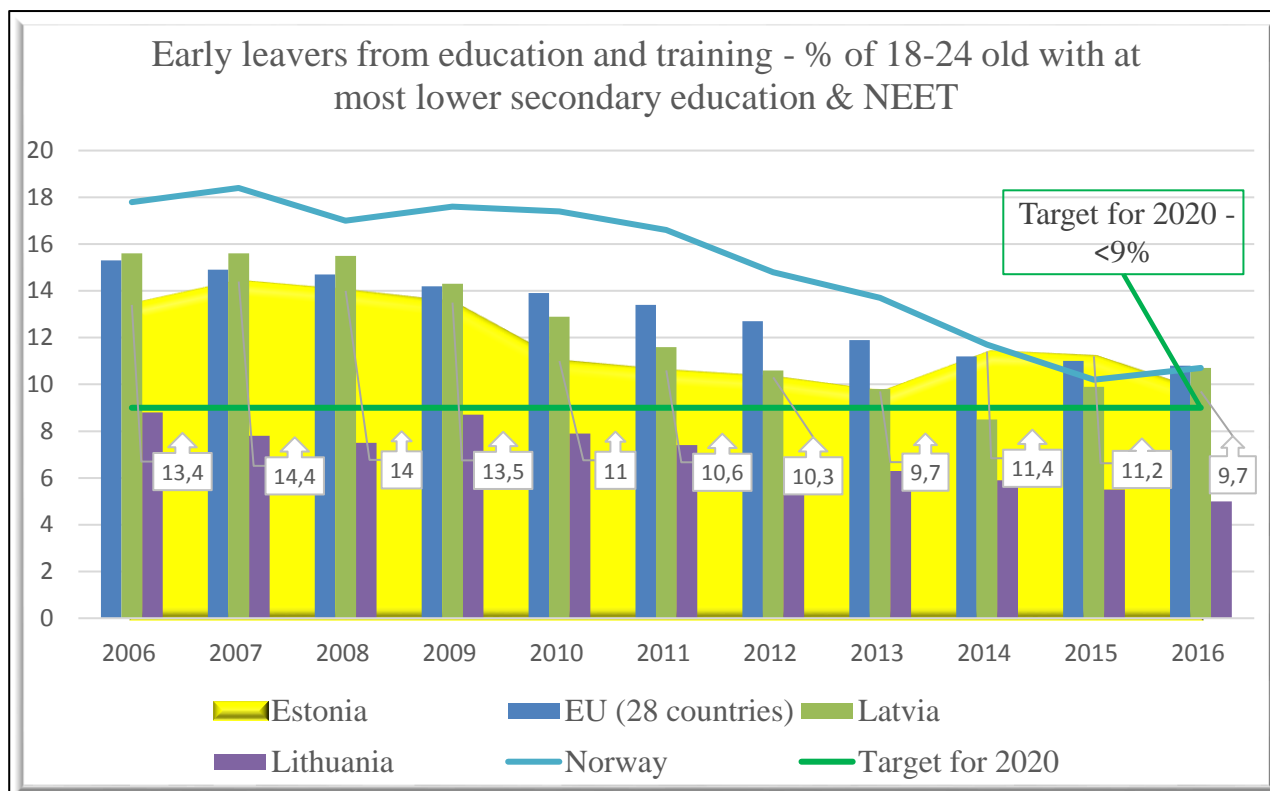
Source: Statistics Estonia

Young people are a large risk group on the labour market. The youth (15-24) unemployment rate is a problem in practically all EU Member States. In Estonia the youth unemployment rate was 13,4 in 2016, (13,1 % in 2015, 15% in 2014 and 18.7% in 2013), the average unemployment rate being 6,8 in 2016 (6,2% in 2015, 7.4% in 2014 and 8.7% in 2013).

Early school-leavers are more likely to be unemployed and live at risk of poverty during the subsequent periods of their lives. Thus, success on the labour market depends on the quality of young people's studies and the education they acquire. Their more difficult situation on the labour market is also reflected by the fact that young people who were not in education, employment, or training (NEETs). Also, young people who have committed offences find it more difficult to participate in the labour market. High youth unemployment is a major social risk factor in the long run. This may lead to the exclusion of this age group from the labour market and society as a whole.

There were adolescents aged 15-24 neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET) 9,1% of the age group in 2016, 10,8% in 2015 and 11,7% in 2014.

<sup>19</sup> <http://pub.stat.ee/px-web.2001/dialog/Saveshow.asp>



Source: Eurostat<sup>20</sup>

Youth work is very important in preventing dropping off the education path. Participation in non-formal activities offers opportunities to acquire competences valuable for entire life and helps reduce the risk of exclusion

The indicators for measuring results of youth work have experienced positive development over the past five years: participation of young people in youth work, i.e. the number of young people participating in hobby education and the work of youth centres is showing a positive trend. It was 37% in 2010, 50% in 2016 and the target for 2020 is 60%.

Indicator	2013	2014	2015	2016		2017	2018	2019	2020
				Target	Achievement				
Participation of young people in youth work (% of all young people)	46,4	47	49,1	50	50	53	56	58	60

Source: Ministry of Education and Research

<sup>20</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=t2020\\_40](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=t2020_40)

## b) The contribution of EEA Grants

The Children and Youth at Risk Programme is focused mostly on the efforts to help vulnerable (neglected, abused, truant children, pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties, children in broken and poor homes and with weak social ties, children in closed institutions) children and minors who breach norms and laws in society. The specific field has previously been underfunded and fragmented.

Norway and Iceland have long experience in dealing with children at risk and improving their well-being. As timely and relevant intervention is of crucial relevance, the transfer of knowledge is very valuable for Estonia. With the partners' support, advice and best practice examples of a developed sustainable system, remarkable achievements can be seen.

Activities under the programme have contributed to inclusion of young people in risk of exclusion and improved their employment readiness, helped to intensify the contact with them, reduced drop-out rate and developed a wholesome package of support services.

Among others through the project "The Implementation of the Support Programme for the Children at Risk Through Youth Centres" a total of 86 youth centres chose effective interest-based measures or methods in youth work for Estonia and adapted these as appropriate in cooperation with the Norwegian partner. A total of 20,000 young people (including 3,500 youngsters who had not previously had a chance to participate), 400 youth workers, 1,500 teachers, and 2,500 parents were involved in project activities all over Estonia. A total of 59 support groups and twelve camps for youths took place in Estonia. A total of 104,000 participations in activities took place within the implementation period of two years. Mobile youth work opportunities were created in 43 areas across Estonia.

Under supported project "HUKK-AP", which aimed to create prerequisites and working solutions in order to involve disadvantaged youngsters, equally with other youngsters, 69 new regional hobby activities have been created, where a total of 3,231 young people at risk have taken part in hobby education activities, 1,806 of them were systematically engaged;

Under the positive parenting programme, Incredible Years (IY), the training groups for Russian and Estonian-speaking parents were carried out and the regional level coordination mechanism has been created to provide support and services for children and families. Under the project for youths with serious behavioural problems and their families the Multidimensional Family Therapy (MDFT), several consultations with experts, partners, and affiliated groups have been carried out. The children and family welfare profile has been prepared. There are five MDFT teams currently working with young people and their families across Estonia - more than 141 families have ended therapy and with around 90 therapy is still progress.

From April 2017 the costs of the MDFT will be covered by the Estonian state budget. The plan is to broaden the MDFT to closed institutions for juveniles in order to tighten up family relations and support a return into the community.

Under the school-based projects among others prevention of potential risks (dropping out, poor learning motivation and educational achievement, school bullying, etc) was set as objective and addressed. For example at the end of the project "Bullying-free kindergarten and school", the method known as 'Free of Bullying' as the first evidence-based effort against bullying in preschools already covers two-thirds of kindergartens in Estonia and also 16% of Estonian schools

(Grades 1-3). During the project period, sustainable training teams have been created; over a thousand specialists have passed through 'Free of Bullying' training, while the Centre for Ethics at the University of Tartu has provided training on values education for a total of 71 schools. Created pedagogical tools enable teachers to talk to children with ease about an otherwise abstract subject such as bullying. The programme provides advice and information for parents about their important roles in preventing bullying. The 'Free of Bullying' website (which includes the mobile application, 'SõberKaru'),<sup>21</sup> is part of parental education and is also part of the educational environment for children.

As can be seen above, the projects have had direct positive and sustainable impact to the well-being of children and youth and has been named as evident success story.

## **2.2 Bilateral relations**

### **Extent of cooperation, improved knowledge, and mutual understanding**

As in previous years of implementation, during 2016 the POs also played an active role in fostering bilateral relations. Facilitation of bilateral cooperation has been carried out on different levels, starting from ministries, umbrella organisations, universities etc. The bilateral cooperation during the implementation of the programmes has a clear impact on the extension of cooperation.

There have been organised multilateral networking events, cooperation seminars and workshops and study tours. Also, Norwegian experts have provided consultations sharing professional experience and contact seminars have included a wide range of peer learning and knowledge exchange activities.

All the POs highlighted in the annual reports the very important role of the donor programme partners, who have been excellent advisers in all matters concerning the implementation of the programmes (e.g. given valuable advice on selection criteria and procedures) and a particularly great help in finding partners through their professional networks distributing information to potential partners.

### **Shared results and wider effects**

From the bilateral fund on the national level the Norwegian-Estonian e-Governance Initiative activities continued in 2016. This aim of the feasibility study is to strengthen cooperation between Norway and Estonia and in particular to strengthen, implement and develop cooperation between leading partners in Norway and Estonia within the areas of innovation, business development and e-governance (including cyber security). The project took place between October 2015 and July 2016 providing the partners with multiple opportunities to hold workshops for exchange of information drafted by each project partner. Main outcomes of the study are: concept paper "Norwegian e-Government Cyber Security project"; concept paper "e-Estonia: e-Governance in Practice"; roadmap and the Business Plan for Seed Forum iHUB Lab in Tallinn; plan for co-operation by project partners.

In November 2016 Integrated Marine and Inland Water Management Programme had representatives from Estonian Environmental Board and Environmental Agency participating in international conference on protection of marine areas. The conference took place in Jurata (Gdansk region) in Poland. In August representative from Ministry of the Environment participated United Nations Conference Empowering the Environment in Ljubljana in Slovenia,

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<sup>21</sup> <http://kiusamisestvabaks.ee/about-us>

that was aimed climate changes and sustainable development. Both events took place to support networking, exchange, sharing and transfer knowledge, experiences and best practices between relevant entities in Estonia and Donor States and international organisations, within the relevant programme area - protection of marine areas and climate changes.

During 2016 The Programme Children and Youth at Risk had many important bilateral activities. In cooperation with The Donor Programme Partner two Cooperation Committee meetings with visits to local organisations were held, on 11<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> of May in Iceland and 29<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup> of November in Norway. The final conference took place on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June, it was concentrated on providing an overview of the Programme period, best practise, and learning curves. An overview of bilateral relations with Icelandic and Norwegian partners was also given. The seminar for personnel who work with children and youths who have committed offences took place on 27<sup>th</sup> -28<sup>th</sup> October. The seminar concentrated on sharing experiences with experts from other countries regarding practices and working methods on the topics of treating youths who have committed offences and on child-friendly proceedings. It can be said that the bilateral cooperation during the implementation of the Programme has had a clear impact on the extension of the cooperation process.



### 3. REPORTING ON PROGRAMMES

#### 3.1 Overview of Programme status

	Programme	Open calls launched/closed	Commitments made by PO <sup>22</sup>	Disbursements made by PO <sup>23</sup>
EE02	Integrated Marine and Inland Water Management	All planned open calls launched, carried out and finished. Programme will end on the 31th of December 2017.	6 900 000	5 871 183
EE04	Children and Youth at Risk	All planned open calls launched, carried out and finished. Programme will end on the 31th of December 2017.	6 505 000	5 440 332
EE05	Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage	All planned open calls launched, carried out and finished. Programme will end on the 30th of April 2017.	4 510 000	4 432 907
EE10	EEA Scholarship Programme	All planned open calls launched, carried out and finished. Programme will end on the 30th of April 2017.	1 600 000 <sup>24</sup>	1 196 362

#### 3.2 Individual Programme summaries

##### 3.2.1 Integrated Marine and Inland Water Management

The programme has three expected outcomes and under each up to three outputs:

1<sup>st</sup> expected outcome – “Established environmental targets and management plans for marine and inland waters” and its outputs:

- The programme of measures for the Estonian marine area, including a feasibility study on using LNG as an alternative ship fuel to reduce the pollution developed.
- An integrated governance system for maintaining marine, coastal, and inland water ecosystem services developed and the capacity raised, including the favourable conservation status identified (through conducted inventories and enhanced databases) and relevant methods to establish baseline scenarios, and a monitoring and reporting system for the number of marine, coastal, and inland water habitat types and species according to the Habitats and Bird Directive and Marine Strategy Framework Directive developed.

2<sup>nd</sup> expected outcome – “Improved environmental information on impact, status, and trends” and its outputs:

- Data-modelling system and the decision support tool for the integrated marine and inland water management developed.
- An infrastructure for spatial information according to the requirements of the INSPIRE Directive established.

<sup>22</sup> According to the Structural Funds Operating System (grant) 31.12.2016

<sup>23</sup> According to the Structural Funds Operating System (grant) and DoRIS 31.12.2016

<sup>24</sup> Together with the Norwegian-Estonian Scholarship Programme

- The methodology developed and assessments for the key ecosystem services of marine and inland waters conducted. The conservation management of habitats for the threatened fish population of the Baltic Sea, and implementation of action plans for threatened river species (e.g. freshwater pearl mussel) carried out.

3<sup>rd</sup> expected outcome – “Developed strategies and measures for adapting to a changing climate” and its outputs:

- Proposal for Estonian climate change adaptation strategy compiled.
- Research to analyse and identify impacts of climate change and assessment of national measures for adaptation carried out.

To achieve the expected outcomes, the programme comprised of four predefined projects and three open calls were approved in the programme agreement.

Of thirteen projects, four were completed during 2015 and eight were completed by the end of April 2016. All completed projects had their closing events and project promoters and project partners introduced the results to the public. The predefined project “The development of data-modelling system and the decision support tool for the integrated marine and inland water management” was extended until the end of April 2017 and whole programme was extended until the end of 2017.

All completed projects achieved their projects outcomes and gave input to fulfil the programme outputs. After finishing the one ongoing predefined project, all programme outputs and indicators will be fulfilled.

The predefined project “Developing the programme of measures for the Estonian marine area in compliance with the requirements of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive, including feasibility study on using LNG as an alternative ship fuel to reduce pollution” had two main outcomes for Estonia – producing both the monitoring programme and the programme of measures for Estonian marine area. These two programmes are the first time when the coverage of actions taken is the whole Estonian marine area and the programme of measures is the 1st strategic document in Estonia where all marine environment protection related measures are combined into one document.

Due to the open call I and II a significant amount (3000 km<sup>2</sup>) of new information about marine habitats location and status were collected, including the information about Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), monitoring and assessment methods for marine and coastal habitat types as well as for ringed seals were worked out. In addition to that, the methods for assessment and mapping of ecosystem services of marine and inland waters were developed, and restoration work of two river habitats (including only location of Freshwater pearl mussel habitat in Estonia) were carried out.

Very significant contribution in the adaptation to the climate change has been done during the period 2013-2016 in Estonia. The predefined project “Development of Estonian climate change adaptation strategy and measures” main outcomes the climate change risk and vulnerability assessment and cost-effectiveness assessment for adaptation measures in the most vulnerable sectors are reached and the national climate change adaptation strategy „Development Plan for Climate Change Adaptation until 2030“ and the implementation plan with it are developed. The predefined project contributed to a more climate-resilient Estonia and this was the first time when Estonia developed the coherent approach in adapting to climate change field and assembled all the available knowledge about different impacts caused by climate change in our region. Before the year 2013 the information about climate change impacts in different sectors was fragmented and

scattered between different authorities and institutes, but since the 2017 we can plan and direct the field of climate change adaptation comprehensively through one development plan.

Bilateral relations have been strengthened mainly through events focusing on the development of project partnerships. Co-operation with the Donor Programme Partner has been very close and effective. Within thirteen projects a total of twelve partnership (eleven from Norway and one from Iceland) contracts have been signed with the institutions of donor countries.

In November 2016 representatives from Estonian Environmental Board and Environmental Agency participated in international conference on protection of marine areas. The conference took place in Jurata (Gdansk region) in Poland. In August representative from Ministry of the Environment participated United Nations Conference Empowering the Environment in Ljubljana in Slovenia, that was aimed climate changes and sustainable development. Both events took place to support networking, exchange, sharing and transfer knowledge, experiences and best practices between relevant entities in Estonia and Donor States and international organisations, within the relevant programme area - protection of marine areas and climate changes.

The principles of horizontal concerns have been followed in the programme. The Programme and the projects under it are planned, selected and implemented in accordance with all of the elements of good governance. The Programme is dedicated to projects that contribute to the improvement of the status of the environment, especially in the field of marine and inland waters. The Programme has encouraged the project's promoters to implement their projects as being environmentally friendly and with the smallest carbon footprint possible. The current Programme has a positive impact on economic sustainability. The Programme contributed directly to the goals of social sustainability as most of the environmental activities have a direct or indirect positive impact upon quality of life and also on public health. Environmental problems (changes in the surrounding environment, including water bodies, biological diversity, and climate change) have a direct impact on both women and men, therefore in that sense the Programme is gender neutral.

In June 2016 the Co-operation Committee decided to increase Water-modelling Project's budget 296 660 € and extend Project until 30<sup>th</sup> April 2017 and to extend whole Programme until 31<sup>th</sup> December 2017 and to add other leftovers to bilateral fund.

### **3.2.2 Children and Youth at Risk**

The programme has two expected outcomes, with five outputs under the first outcome and two outputs under the second:

1<sup>st</sup> expected outcome – “Effective and efficient measures addressing vulnerable groups of children and youth facing particular risks implemented” and its outputs:

- A regional-level coordination mechanism created to provide support and services for children and families.
- Regional support units for children and families established.
- Community-based crime prevention measures enforced in a larger number of municipalities.
- More inclusive integration strategies leading to reduced drop-out rates of forms 7–9 in schools.
- Increased capability of youth organisations and youth work organisations to involve children and youth at risk.

2<sup>nd</sup> expected outcome – “Policies and standards of intervention in the field of juvenile justice developed and implemented with a view to ensuring protection and securing full rights during detention and a wide range of opportunities for young offenders to reintegrate society created” and its outputs:

- Social inclusion of excluded young people and prevention of re-offending behaviour.
- Aftercare for incarcerated youth provided.

To achieve the expected outcomes, the programme comprised of one predefined project, four open calls, and two small grant schemes was approved in the programme agreement. By the end of the reporting period all the calls foreseen were carried out.

Based on preliminary assessment of the granted projects' expected outcomes and the results already achieved under the predefined project, it can be assumed that all the target values of the programme's expected outcome and output indicators will be fulfilled by completion of the supported projects.

The key achievements that have been made in terms of meeting the Programme's objectives during the reporting period are as follows:

- In order to ensure the framework for co-operation between the national Programme partners, a Trilateral Agreement has been followed between the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Social Affairs.
- The projects under the open and small grant scheme have been implemented with good levels of quality in terms of their outcome. These projects helped to achieve the following outcomes: community-based crime prevention measures are being enforced in a larger number of municipalities (target was 62 and the achieved level is 66); more inclusive integration strategies lead to reduced drop-out rates for Grades 7-9 in schools; excluded young people are socially included, re-offending behaviour is prevented (a total of 3,231 young people at risk have taken part in hobby education activities, with 1,806 of them having been systematically engaged); and 329 incarcerated youths received aftercare. The project promoters have paid special attention to involving minorities in project activities. Many of the implemented activities achieved noticeable levels of appreciation.
- Predefined project activities have been implemented according to plan. The implementation of two evidence-based programmes has been continued - the positive parenting programme, Incredible Years (IY), and for youths with serious behavioural problems and their families the Multidimensional Family Therapy (MDFT). The IY training groups for Russian and Estonian-speaking parents were carried out and the regional level coordination mechanism has been created to provide support and services for children and families. LGAs were selected to participate in a pilot project. Several consultations with experts, partners, and affiliated groups have been carried out. The children and family welfare profile has been prepared. There are five MDFT teams currently working with young people and their families across Estonia - by the end of November more than 141 families have ended therapy and a 89 families remain a 'work in progress'. In 2016 the risk assessment instrument, YSL, was tested as a method of pre and post-evaluation. The Praxis research centre has been working on the impact evaluation and cost benefit analysis for the MDFT. From April 2017 the costs of the MDFT will be covered by the Estonian state budget. The plan is to broaden the MDFT to closed institutions for juveniles in order to tighten up family relations and support a return into the community.

- The specific conditions have been followed where these have been set under the Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of the EEA financial mechanism.<sup>25</sup> Support provided under this Programme has ensured the strengthening of capacity for municipal authorities when it comes to addressing the main focus of the Programme. Activities have been initiated both at central and local levels. Attention has been given to municipalities with a high percentage of national minorities.
- Promoting tolerance, multicultural understanding, and the rights of minorities was supported via the implementation of several projects. Minorities were included in various activities under the umbrella of those projects being financed. Special attention was given to implementing activities which involve youths with special needs (including those with disabilities, study difficulties, etc) and whose mother tongue is not Estonian.
- The Programme and project promoter's activities were implemented with visible media coverage.

Cooperation has been productive between the Programme Operator and the donor Programme partner, the Norwegian Association of Regional and Local Authorities. During the reporting period the Programme's cooperation partners came from Norway, Iceland, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, and the Netherlands. The cooperation process was executed via events held by project organisers, programme operators and Cooperation Committee meetings, a bilateral seminar, and the final conference. During this period, several communication events were conducted (including the development of a website for the Programme, the use of social media, and the Programme's final conference). Special attention was paid to communication activities (including proactive communications) regarding results achieved within the Programme.

The Programme was co-ordinated by the Ministry of Education and Research and the Estonian Youth Work Centre, and was empowered by an established national steering committee, which involved national partners. The Cooperation Committee has found the implementation of activities to be highly satisfactory. The monitoring activities were conducted according to the initial plan and these support the implementation process.

The programme is addressed at horizontal concerns related to fundamental values such as promoting tolerance, multicultural understanding, and respect for the rights of minorities which are supported through the implementation of the projects. The support under the programme ensures strengthening the capacity of municipalities, with special attention to municipalities with a high percentage of national minorities.

The Programme Agreement was modified in November, based on the necessity for changes during the implementation of the programme, such as with additional areas of knowledge and results-sharing, achieving the sustainability of results, and due to a strong desire to ensure harmony between different paths of action for the Programme. Due to the programme being extended and additional activities being implemented, management costs increased, but these have not exceeded the permitted spending ceiling.

No need for major adjustments within the programme has occurred.

### **3.2.3 Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage**

The programme has two expected outcomes and two outputs under each:

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<sup>25</sup> [http://eeagrants.fin.ee/sites/default/files/EEA\\_MoU\\_Annex\\_B\\_amendment\\_no\\_2.pdf](http://eeagrants.fin.ee/sites/default/files/EEA_MoU_Annex_B_amendment_no_2.pdf).

1<sup>st</sup> expected outcome – “Cultural heritage restored, renovated, and protected” and its outputs:

- Restored manor schools
- Counties with restored manor schools

2<sup>nd</sup> expected outcome – “Local communities further developed and economically sustainable livelihoods established through the revitalisation of cultural and natural heritage” and its outputs:

- Networking and awareness raising accomplished through the predefined project
- Additional activities in manor complexes and international cooperation established

To achieve the expected outcomes, the programme comprised of one predefined project, one call for proposals targeted at restoration projects, and one small grant scheme targeted at development projects was approved in the programme agreement.

During the reporting period the main focus was on the bilateral relations. All projects had been concluded by 2015 with the exception of one restoration project and predefined project that ended in 2016. All programme outputs and indicators were fulfilled.

Taking into account the contribution of development projects, the planned target of the indicator of the output “number of restored buildings”– 25 schools is exceeded. The target achieved is 28 manor buildings restored. The target of the indicator of the output of "minimum number of supported counties” is achieved and exceeded as 4 restoration project contracts with the owners of manor schools in 4 different counties were concluded. The abovementioned development projects add 3 more counties. The estimated indicator was 3 counties. The total 7 counties covers nearly half of Estonian 15 counties.

The implementation of the predefined project, especially the exhibition, conference and publication, has effectively supported the overall implementation of the programme and the achievement of its goals, including awareness raising and also helped to involve new strategic partners.

The programme has been actively promoted among potential beneficiaries and general public in Estonia and internationally. The feedback has been very positive and supporting. The potential of the manor schools as unique educational and cultural centres has become known and popular, especially in the scope of ongoing administrative reform in Estonia. The opportunity of the programme is to support the goals of heritage protection, education, regional and sustainable development thus promoting the common European values.

In addition the bilateral funds were used to improve the skills of specialists and students of conservation and restoration through workshops and study tours and to improve the knowledge, exchange experience and create networks.

Regard to bilateral activities 3 intensive study tours were carried out in 2016. In April 38 owners of rural buildings and specialists from the Centre of Rural Architecture visited relevant partners and institutions in Norway. In September 20 students of conservation and restoration in Estonian Academy of Arts participated at the combination of seminar and study tour on colour schemes of wooden architecture in Roros area in Norway. In May the study and networking tour for 50 project promoters and partners was carried out in Stavanger and Bergen area in Norway. In 2016 3 specialised workshops were carried out in Estonia. In May the workshop to conserve historical manor wallpapers took together 29 specialists and students from Estonia, Norway, Latvia and Lithuania. In September an intensive seminar on use of nano technology in restoration took place for 32 specialists. Norwegian experts participated, held a workshop and gave a presentation on

traditional public awareness raising event Ecofair that attracted ca 2000 visitors. In June awareness raising event to report on the outcome of the programme was carried out in Oslo together with the opening of the manor school exhibition. All bilateral activities had a highly positive feedback and resulted in many new contacts and the follow-up activities are planned.

During all the activities in 2016 special attention was turned to good governance and equal treatment. The focus of the overall programme is on sustainable development via restoration and preservation of historic buildings and economic and social sustainability of local communities. During the implementation of the programme specific attention is turned to sustainability and ecological aspects i.e. majority of the work is done by e-solutions; all relevant documents and information has been spread and archived electronically to reduce the waste of paper. During the programme no-one has been discriminated based on their gender, race or religion. All people working with and for the programme have been chosen based on their professional merits.

No need for major adjustments within the programme has occurred.

### **3.2.4 EEA and Norwegian-Estonian Scholarship Programme**

The programme has two expected outcomes and up to three outputs under these:

1<sup>st</sup> expected outcome – “Increased and strengthened institutional cooperation at all levels of the education sector (school education, higher education, vocational training/education, and adult education) between Estonia and EEA EFTA States” and its outputs:

- Inter-institutional cooperation projects in the upper secondary education sector between Estonia and EEA EFTA States
- Increased mobility for staff related to the inter-institutional cooperation projects at the upper secondary education level
- Preparing and working on innovative measures in the teaching process (as a result of the cooperation projects)

2<sup>nd</sup> expected outcome – “Increased higher education student and staff mobility between Estonia and Norway” and its outputs:

- Increased HE student mobility between Estonia and Norway through different types of mobility
- Increasing staff mobility between Estonia and Norway through different types of mobility

Out of ten projects, free submitted their final reports by the end of the year 2015 and seven by the end of the year 2016. 7 joint teaching materials have been developed, the mutual knowledge and understanding between partner schools is increased through cooperation, shared outcomes and staff visits. In 2016 participation of 90 teachers and 37 administrative staff in the mobility activities was reported. Experiencing the differences and similarities in the education field is considered highly valuable by the teachers and administrative staff of the schools.

Target levels of all output indicators, except for the number of mobile students as part of new or existing mobility agreements and number of HE students involved in work placements, have been achieved and exceeded.

Some indicators (number of bilateral partnership agreements - 10; number of projects - 10; number of promotional events where EEA/NO Grants scholarship programme was presented 4) were achieved already in previous years (related to open calls 2013 and 2014). In 2016 no new agreements were concluded or projects initiated and most of the efforts were targeted to successful finalisation of ongoing projects. Relating to the number of mobile staff in cooperation projects the

mobility of 90 teachers (total 191) and 37 administrative staff (total 60) was reported in 2016 and the total targets of two indicators were remarkably exceeded.

As written above the target levels of three indicators could not be achieved: number of mobile students as part of new or existing mobility agreements (2016 – 21; total 42); number of HE students involved in work placements (2016 - 15, total - 25); number of mobile staff as part of new or existing mobility agreements (2016 – 118, total - 201). There are several reasons causing on one hand the low number of students both for studies and placements and on the other hand the unexpected high number of staff mobility. First of all there is a decrease in number of students in Estonia generally due to the demographic reasons and that influences also the number of mobile students. Another reason is related to the fact that Erasmus+ programme supports rather the student than staff mobility and this has also influence to the results by encouraging HEI-s staff to use mobility opportunities of other programmes like EEA/Norway Scholarship programme.

In 2016 the funds for bilateral relations have been used for sending 2 project participants (one from Estonia and 1 from Iceland) to the outreach event in Brussels.

In June 2016 an evaluation of the programme was initiated by the Fund Operator. Evaluation of the programme, carried out in 2016 shows that EEA/Norway grants scholarship programme is one of the most valuable scholarship programmes for increasing mobility and bilateral relations between Estonia-Iceland and Estonia-Norway. The programme enabled to create new and to strengthen old partnerships, gave a possibility to exchange experiences, increase knowledge in specific fields, create new ideas for projects and articles. According to the evaluation the effectiveness of the implementation of EEA/Norway grants scholarship programme has been rather high and most of the indicators have been achieved. The recommendations for the programme (or similar programmes in the future) include better communication on institutional and beneficiary level (both in Donor and Beneficiary countries), better partner search facilities or tools, application deadlines that follow academic calendars in the partner countries, less and simpler reporting, more flexibility in the use of grants. In order to increase the bilateral cooperation and its sustainability, the evaluation recommends to continue with the programme and to increase the awareness of the programme.

One of the major risks concerning the strengthening of bilateral relations was related to the low level of interest among the Norwegian HEIs and other institutions to exchange students and staff with Estonian HEIs. At the end of the Programme the risk of not reaching some target levels of the Programme indicators and having unused funds under the mobility measure is still actual. Unfortunately the actions foreseen to mitigate this risk (stronger support to HEIs participating in the Programme and encouraging them to find alternative partners) have not been successful enough.

In 2016 a request for an amendment of the Programme Agreement was presented to the Financial Mechanism Office. The proposal was related to amend the agreement with the provision allowing allocating the remaining funds from Measure 2 and 5 which cannot be reallocated due to the time restriction, to the bilateral fund. The request was approved and the amendments issued in October 2016. The Amendment will help to ensure the use of the remaining funds of the Programme.



## **4. MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION**

### **4.1 Management and control systems**

The management and control systems of the National Focal Point, the Certifying Authority, the Audit Authority and the entity responsible for the preparation and submission of irregularities reports remained in place in 2016.

At the programme level, setup of management and control systems started for all programmes in 2013 and were finalised in 2014. In 2016 the management and control systems at programme level remained the same.

### **4.2 Compliance with EU legislation, national legislation, and the MoU**

#### **Legal basis**

The Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009–2014 between Estonia on one side, and Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway on the other, entered into force on 11<sup>th</sup> of June 2011, and the legal framework of the financial mechanism based on the memorandum serves as the main legal basis for implementing the EEA Grants and is followed by the Estonian state.

Annexes A and B to the Memorandum of Understanding were updated in August 2015 due to increasing the allocation for the fund for bilateral relations at national level and decreasing the allocation for technical assistance. The changes are related to the funding Estonian-Norwegian e-Governance Initiative.

The Government of the Republic of Estonia Decree No. 78 “The rules and procedures for application for and implementation of the grants from the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2009–2014” for establishment of the rules and procedures for application for and implementation of the grant from the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2009–2014 replacing the implementation agreements between the National Focal Point and the Programme Operators remained unchanged in 2014.

The Government of the Republic of Estonia Decree No. 278 “Reclamation and repayment of grants, and rules and procedures for reporting on irregularities in awarding and using the grants” of 22 December 2006, which stipulates the requirements for informing about irregularities or fraud and conditions for repayment of the financial support, was updated according to the needs for implementing the Grants. The updated Decree entered into force on 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2014.

When reviewing the programme documents (open call criteria, draft agreements, etc.), special attention has been paid by the National Focal Point in assuring compliance with the legislative framework inter alia the compliance with Community Policy (state aid, public procurement, programme area specific directives).

#### **State aid**

In order to make full use of available expertise, the National Focal Point and the Programme Operators have had several consultations on state aid with the Public Procurement and State Aid Department of the Ministry of Finance. In some calls the possibility of granting either state aid or de minimis aid was identified.

In all actual cases, relevant measures were taken, i.e. the project budgets were reviewed and related conditions were included in the project contracts.

Regarding all possible and actual cases of either de minimis aid or state aid, the Public Procurement and State Aid Department of the Ministry of Finance has been consulted. Information on de minimis aid previously granted to Estonian applicants has been checked from the relevant register under the Ministry of Finance and will be taken into account when awarding the grant.

### **Public Procurement**

In order to improve the competence of public procurement procedures of the project promoters and avoid subsequent problems, Programme Operators or Implementing Agencies have advised or organised area-specific trainings on public procurement for the project promoters during the implementation period of EEA Financial Mechanisms 2009–2014.

In addition to this, the expertise of the Managing Authority of the Structural Funds for ex-ante check and advice from the Public Procurement and State Aid Department of the Ministry of Finance are available.

### **Irregularities**

Programme Operator submits the information about the irregularities to the National Focal Point via internal information system of Estonia named SFOS. All cases of the irregularities are then checked by the National Focal Point. After that the National Focal Point composes reports about the irregularities and submits the reports to the FMO via DoRIS. In 2017 the National Focal Point will continue with the same approach in internal and external reporting of the irregularities.

There were 18 cases of new and ongoing irregularities in Estonia in the EEA and/or Norwegian Financial Mechanisms in 2016:

- 2 cases at programme level.
- 18 cases at project level.
- No irregularities at beneficiary state level were detected.

Most of the cases were discovered by the Programme Operators/Implementing Agencies, 5 cases were discovered by Audit Authority, one case was discovered by National Focal Point. Nature of irregularities: 8 deviations from programme agreement/project contract, 10 deviations from public procurement procedures, one error in payment claim, one case of fraud/corruption. 3 cases were closed by Programme Operators without making the financial correction decision while there was no irregularity.

According to the decision of the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board as concerns the before mentioned fraud case (IR-0348) the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner was fined. Financial correction has been made, Programme Operators has closed the case.

FMO has closed 8 cases since the beginning of 2016 (one was closed in 2017). So there are 12 cases not closed by FMO out of which 9 cases have been closed by Programme Operators. Which means that there are only 3 cases with no final decision/ reimbursement by PP.

Detailed cumulative financial information about the irregularities is shown in annexes 4 and 5.

### 4.3 Audit, monitoring, review, and evaluation

#### National Focal Point

In 2015 the NFP carried out a risks assessment based on fraud indicators (red-flags) in the projects data and payments details that Programme Operators had inserted into Estonia's internal information system SFOS. Programme Operators were informed of all of the risks identified. After analysis by the PO's and NFP some of the risks emerged into irregularities, but major fraud cases were not discovered. The NFP assisted the Programme Operators to ensure that reviews based on the risks discovered were effective and that the risks were mitigated with monitoring activities.

In the beginning of 2016 NFP conducted fraud risk assessments with all of the Programme Operators. Detailed summary of the highest possible fraud risks identified was given in previous strategic report.

As no additional risk indicators emerged, the NFP did not conduct any additional risk assessment in the III quarter of 2016.

Detailed summary of the risks identified by Programme Operators in their Annual Programme Reports for 2016 is shown in annex 7. Detailed cumulative financial information about the irregularities is shown in annexes 4 and 5.

#### Audit Authority

Audit Authority is responsible for submitting an annual audit report to the Financial Mechanism Committee and to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The annual audit report sets out the findings of the audits carried out during the previous 12 month-period ending on 30 June of the year concerned

During the last reporting period Audit Authority carried out the following audits of the programmes financed by the EEA and the NFM:

	Management and control system audits	Audits on projects
EE02 - Integrated marine and inland water management	1	2
EE05 - Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage	-	1
EE08 - Public Health Initiatives	1	2
EE09 - Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance	1	3
EE11 - Domestic and Gender-based Violence	1	3

#### The results of management and control system audits

- EE02 - Integrated marine and inland water management  
Audit report No II-171/2015 (16.10.2015). The objective of the audit was to evaluate the efficiency of the management and control systems of the Estonian Ministry of Environment as the Programme Operator in implementing the EEA Financial Mechanisms 2009-2014. Operator in implementing the EEA Financial Mechanisms 2009-2014. As the result of the

audit the auditors came to the conclusion that the management and control systems works well, but some improvements are needed (Category II<sup>26</sup>).

- EE08 - Public Health Initiatives; EE09 - Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance; EE11 - Domestic and Gender-based Violence  
Audit report No II-175/2015 (25.05.2016). The objective of the audit was to evaluate the efficiency of the management and control systems of the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs as the Programme Operator in implementing the NFM Financial Mechanisms 2009-2014. As the result of the audit the auditors came to the conclusion that the management and control systems works well, but some improvements are needed (Category II)

### **The results of project audits**

- EE02 - Integrated marine and inland water management
  - Audit report No II-173/2015 (09.10.2015). No findings.
  - Audit report No II-174/2015 (18.09.2015). No findings.
- EE05 - Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage
  - Audit report No II-168/2015, 14.07.2015). No findings.
- EE08 - Public Health Initiatives
  - Audit report No II-176/2015 (05.01.2016). No findings.
  - Audit report No II-177/2016 (10.12.2015). The audit report contained one finding with financial impact – bonuses were given to staff working in the NFM supported project at Tallinn’s Children’s Hospital under programme EE08. Based on the Donors opinion the finding was withdrawn during the follow-up activities.  
*NFP comment: No financial correction was made due to legal debates, the basis of error did not occur.*
- EE09 - Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance<sup>27</sup>
  - Audit report No II-178/2015 (19.02.2016). No findings.
  - Audit report No II-179/2015 (05.01.2016). No findings.
  - Audit report No II-181/2015 (20.04.2016). The audit report contained one finding with financial impact – The Project Promoter had ordered legal aid services ignoring the Anti-Corruption Law (conflict of interest between contract parties). Ineligible expenditure detected in the amount of 4100 euros. The National Focal Point has made the recommendation to the Programme Operator to reclaim the assistance (09.09.2016).  
*NFP comment: financial correction was made on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2016, unduly paid amount was recovered on the 9<sup>th</sup> of January 2017.*
- EE11 - Domestic and Gender-based Violence<sup>28</sup>
  - Audit report No II-180/2015 (26.04.2016). The audit report contained one finding with financial impact – The Project Promotor has not defined itself as the Contracting Authority by the means of the Estonian Public Procurement Act and therefore has not

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<sup>26</sup> Category I – Works well; only minor improvements needed.

Category II – Works, but some improvements are needed.

Category III – Works partially; substantial improvements are needed.

Category IV – Essentially does not work.

<sup>27</sup> 2 audit reports are being finalized.

<sup>28</sup> Audit reports are being finalized.

carried out the required procurement. Ineligible expenditure detected in the amount of 10 700 euros. The follow-up actions are pending and the final decision will be made after the legal dispute.

*NFP comment: financial correction was not made, because the Audit Authority didn't confirm the financial impact of the irregularity according to the opinion of Public Procurement and State Aid Department*

- Audit report No II-182/2015 (20.04.2016). No findings.
- Audit Report No II-183/2016 (06.05.2016). The audit report contained one finding with financial impact – The Project Promotor had not ensured a full and fair competition amongst potential bidders when procuring the group therapy services and also ignored conflict of interest. Ineligible expenditure detected in the amount of 12 000 euros. The National Focal Point has made the recommendation to the Programme Operator to reclaim the assistance (19.07.2016).

*NFP comment: financial correction was made on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 2017, deadline for recovery of amounts is 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017 (90 calendar days since the decision was made).*

As all the programmes are ending in 2017 there are no audits planned for the 2017.

## **Evaluation**

1. Integrated Marine and Inland Water Management – evaluation will be carried out mid-2017.

2. Children and Youth at Risk – evaluation will be carried out in 2017.

3. Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage

Impact evaluation on restoration of historic buildings under the EEA Grants Programme “Manor Schools – preservation through use” – evaluation was finalized on 27.01.2017. Evaluation report with executive summary in English is available at the following page - [https://www.kul.rik.ee/sites/kulminn/files/moisakoolide\\_restauereerimise\\_mojude\\_uuring.pdf](https://www.kul.rik.ee/sites/kulminn/files/moisakoolide_restauereerimise_mojude_uuring.pdf)

An economic and socio-economic impact assessment of four restored manor schools was conducted in this study with following objects in focus:

- 1) Aruküla Manor (Koeru Upper Secondary School) in Koeru rural municipality (Järva County);
- 2) Hiiu-Suuremõisa Manor (Hiiu Vocational School and Suuremõisa Basic School) in Pühalepa rural municipality (Hiiu County);
- 3) Koigi Manor (Koigi School) in Koigi rural municipality (Järva County);
- 4) Kiltsi Manor (Kiltsi Basic School) in Väike-Maarja rural municipality (Lääne-Viru County).

Restoration projects in Koigi and Kiltsi manors were completed over 5 years ago and it was already possible to assess the impact. However, restoration projects in Aruküla and Suuremõisa manors were completed in 2015 and 2016, respectively; therefore, the analysis results must be treated with reservation because all impacts may not have become apparent by the time of assessment.

According to the findings the highest impact was on education in the region. On local community, tourism, business in the region and labour market in the region the impact was moderate.

4. Scholarship programme – evaluation carried out in 2016

Results of the evaluation show that EEA/Norway grants scholarship programme is one of the most valuable scholarship programmes for increasing mobility and bilateral relations between Estonia-Iceland and Estonia-Norway.

According to the evaluation the effectiveness of the implementation of EEA/Norway grants scholarship programme has been rather high and most of the indicators have been achieved. The recommendations for the programme include better communication on institutional and beneficiary level (both in Donor and Beneficiary countries), better partner search tools, application deadlines that follow academic calendars in the partner countries, less and simpler reporting, more flexibility in the use of grants.

Evaluation report will be translated and available on the programme website in April 2017.

#### **4.4 Information and publicity**

In general, the communication strategy for the EEA and Norway Grants 2009–2016 in Estonia has been in implementation as planned and does not need revision.

During 2014 most of the publicity was done by the programme operators in connection with launching the calls, organising seminars and conferences, etc. The general Grants website has been updated continuously by the NFP and news on opening calls or invitations to different seminars under the programmes have been distributed via the Facebook page for the Grants as well. Information which has distributed via social media (Facebook) and home page has been written in language which is understandable wide number of people.

With regard to communication of the programmes performed by the programme operators, it can be said that the information and publicity measures that have been taken are effective. The interest in events organised under the programmes as well as active participation in the calls are the best proof of that. As of a year ago special commendation can be given to the programmes of the social field (the Children and Youth at Risk programme, the Public Health Initiatives programme, and the gender programmes) for co-operating in organising events. Special commendation deserves also manor schools program, who has spread information about their programme via different media channels very actively.

Many events and projects have been organized which are funded by EEA and Norway grants, but following projects examples highlights some of them. Firstly, there are made many activities under public health programme to improve the population's health in Estonia and reduce health inequalities by focusing on mental health problems and communicable diseases in prisons. There have organized many topic specific campaigns and it's also important to mention that end of august 2015 opened children's mental health centre in Tallinn.

Secondly, many activities have done in Green Industry programme, where number of environmental technologies have been successfully developed and number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary private sector made. Those steps are very important for everyday life.

The communication work of the programme operators and the National Focal Point can be assessed through the results of the public opinion survey ordered by the Ministry of Finance that for the first time included the EEA and Norway Grants, in addition to the EU Structural Funds in 2013. It then appeared that 27% of the Estonian population aged 18 to 74 knew that Estonia was receiving support from the EEA and Norway Grants. As a result of the survey carried out by Faktum & Ariko in August 2014, it appeared that the awareness of EEA and Norway Grants within the same age group had risen to 35%, which makes the annual growth eight percentage points. As a result of the survey carried out by Saar Poll OÜ in August-September 2015, it appeared that 16% of the Estonian population aged 18 to 74 knew that Estonia was receiving support from the EEA

and Norway Grants. As a result of survey carried out by Turu-uuringute AS in October 2016, it appeared that 11% of the Estonian population aged 18 to 74 knew that Estonia was receiving support from EEA and Norway Grants. It shows big difference in awareness of EEA and Norway Grants in Estonia which can be based in two different social poll firms methodology and also in 2015 many Programme Operators had finished with their projects. Within those aware of the EEA and Norway Grants the level of education showed the biggest difference: the higher the education of respondents, the higher the awareness of the Grants. Also the visibility of the Grants' logos fell during the year between the two surveys from 16% to 9%.

The results of the survey were shared on the Grants website as well as on the Facebook page of the Grants in Estonia. The trends for visibility of the Grants is planned to be monitored annually throughout the entire implementation period.

#### 4.5 Work plan

As all the planned open calls under the EEA Grants programmes were launched by the end of 2014 and most of the actions for disseminating the results of the programmes were planned for 2016.

The table showing the main relevant dates for partner events and information events of the programmes is as follows:

	Programme	Partner/information event
EE02	Integrated Marine and Inland Water Management	1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> of June 2016 – cooperation committee meeting in Estonia. 8 <sup>th</sup> of March 2017 – programme closing seminar. 8 <sup>th</sup> of May 2017 – annual meeting.
EE04	Children and Youth at Risk	Cooperation Committee meetings were prepared in cooperation with DPP KS with study visits to different programme related institutions in Iceland (11-13 May) and in Norway (29 <sup>th</sup> -30 <sup>th</sup> of November) in 2016. Programme open calls final conference was held in 8 <sup>th</sup> of June in 2016. 8 <sup>th</sup> of May 2017 – annual meeting.
EE05	Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage	On 5 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup> of February 2017 training of restoration students from Tartu University Viljandi College in Hjerleid School- and craftcenter in Norway. On 6 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup> of March 2017 study tour “Manor school for all!” to five manor schools. On 17 <sup>th</sup> of March 2017 seminar “„Heritage outside capital city“ in Tallinn. 8 <sup>th</sup> of May 2017 – cooperation committee meeting.
EE10	EEA Scholarship Programme	Two people from implementing agency and 2 people from schools participated in the outreach event organised by the Donor Programme Partners and Financial Mechanism Office in June 2016 in Brussels. In the event, the Programme Operators and Implementing Agencies of Scholarship Programmes shared the results of the programmes in their countries. One person participated in cooperation seminar in Bergen in September 2016. 1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> of March 2017 – programme closing event 8 <sup>th</sup> of May 2017 – annual meeting.

The Monitoring Committee convenes before the annual meeting in order to review the progress of implementation, to give an opinion on the strategic report.

The Cooperation Committees of the programmes are planned to be convened throughout the year in order to discuss work plans of the bilateral funds at the programme level, etc. The dates of the meetings are agreed on a rolling basis.

## **5. SUMMARY LIST OF ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

There are no outstanding issues to be added to those that have already been mentioned under the previous chapters.

## **6. ATTACHMENTS TO THE STRATEGIC REPORT**

1. For each Programme, a table showing the breakdown in respect of applications received and projects selected / contracted, as well as the types of intervention supported.
2. For each Programme, a table providing information in respect of donor partnership projects (names of Donor State entities, number and proportion of partnership projects).
3. A summary table on Donor partnership projects on the Beneficiary State level.
4. A list of irregularities detected at the Beneficiary State level and at Programme level during the reporting period and financial corrections made.
5. For each Programme, a list of irregularities detected at project level during the reporting period and financial corrections made.
6. A plan setting out the monitoring and audit activities in the Beneficiary State for the coming reporting period.
7. A risk assessment at the national and programme levels.