



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

**Information Submitted to the
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for
Human Rights
as a Stakeholder in the
Universal Periodic Review of Estonia**



WARSAW, 22 JUNE 2015

OSCE/ODIHR Submission of Information about an OSCE participating State or Partner for Co-operation under consideration in the Universal Periodic Review Process

Participating/Partner State: Estonia

UPR Session and Date of Review: 24th Session, January-February 2016

Background

Estonia is a participating State in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and has thus undertaken and has recently reaffirmed a wide range of political commitments in the “human dimension” of security as outlined in relevant OSCE documents.¹ The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) has been mandated by OSCE participating States, including Estonia, to assist them in implementing their human dimension commitments. OSCE/ODIHR assistance includes election observation and assessment activities as well as monitoring and providing assessments, advice and recommendations relating to implementation of commitments in the fields of human rights, democracy, tolerance and non-discrimination, and the situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area. The present submission provides publicly available country-specific information that may assist participants in the Universal Periodic Review process in assessing the situation in Estonia and its implementation of past recommendations, as well as to formulate new recommendations that may be relevant to enhancing the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Election-related activities

Following an invitation from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Estonia to the OSCE and based on the recommendation of a Needs Assessment Mission, the OSCE/ODIHR deployed an Election Expert Team (EET) to observe the 1 March 2015 parliamentary elections. The OSCE/ODIHR EET focused on particular aspects of the elections related to Internet voting, political party and campaign finance and the participation of national minorities. The final EET report concluded that “most OSCE/ODIHR EET interlocutors expressed a high degree of trust in reliability and security of Internet voting. Internet voting was administered efficiently and in line with the legal framework, although additional measures can be taken to enhance transparency and accountability of the process.” The report also noted that “The Political Parties Act has been amended several times since the last parliamentary elections, and provides a generally solid legal framework for regulating political party and campaign finance.” The OSCE/ODIHR EET noted a positive trend of parties across the political spectrum placing candidates belonging to national minorities on party lists, in some cases in prominent positions, and greater efforts by parties and candidates to reach out to Russian-speaking voters, including with campaign information in Russian. See the full report and recommendations at <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/estonia/160131>

Legislation reviewed by ODIHR

NTR

¹ Compendium of OSCE Human Dimension Commitments, vol 1 and 2; Astana Commemorative Declaration, 2010.

Tolerance and non-discrimination issues, including incidents of and responses to hate crime

The authorities in Estonia and other sources have not provided information or data on hate crime to ODIHR since the 2010 hate report. However some data and information has been received by civil society organizations and groups².

OSCE participating States have made a number of commitments to promote tolerance and non-discrimination and specifically to combat hate crime, and the OSCE/ODIHR supports states in their implementation of those commitments. In this context, the OSCE/ODIHR reports annually on hate crimes, incidents and responses in the OSCE region– to highlight the prevalence of hate crimes and good practices that participating States and civil society have adopted to tackle them. It also helps participating States to design and draft legislation that effectively addresses hate crimes; provides training that builds the capacity of participating States’ criminal justice systems and the law-enforcement officials, prosecutors and judges that staff them; raises awareness of hate crimes among governmental officials, civil society and international organizations; and supports the efforts of civil society to monitor and report hate crimes.

Starting with its 2012 reporting cycle, ODIHR introduced a system of key observations for all countries, based on OSCE Ministerial Commitments related to hate crime recording and monitoring. For its 2013 reporting cycle, ODIHR made the following observation in relation to Estonia: ‘ODIHR observes that Estonia has not periodically reported reliable information and statistics on hate crimes to ODIHR.’

Information from civil society organizations and groups and intergovernmental organizations

Additionally, ODIHR sent requests for information on hate crime incidents in Estonia to inter-governmental organizations and to international and local civil society organizations and groups. In terms of hate incidents based on bias against Christians, World Without Nazism reported one attempted arson attack and one incident of the desecration of a church. In terms of hate incidents based on bias against LGBT people, the Estonian LGBT Association reported one physical assault and one incident involving threats.

Roma and Sinti issues

The 2013 Status Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE Area points out that Estonia in their reply to the OSCE/ODIHR questionnaire has listed the development and adoption of national Roma policy document as its main achievement in implementation of the OSCE commitments related to Roma and Sinti. See full report at <http://www.osce.org/odihr/107406>

Country-specific ODIHR monitoring, assessment, co-operation and assistance activities (other than elections)

NTR

Other assessments and recommendations contained in ODIHR reports on thematic human issues

Democratic Governance

² <http://hatecrime.osce.org/estonia>

In response to the challenges of lack of accountability and transparency of officials to the electorate, in 2013, ODIHR conducted its outreach activities on promoting parliamentary ethics initiatives by publishing the Background Study: Professional and Ethical Standards for Parliamentarians³ which was presented in Estonia to members of parliament and their parliamentary staff, civil society representatives and expert and academic communities. Following a request from the Parliament of Estonia, ODIHR also participated in a seminar on parliamentary ethics and codes of conduct in May 2013 in Tallinn, which gathered 15 MPs to discuss measures necessary to introduce and enforce ethical standards for parliamentarians.

Migration

Estonia was among three OSCE participating States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), whose representatives of national authorities participated in the two-day regional capacity building training on gender-sensitive labour migration policies organized by ODIHR in Riga in May 2014. ODIHR assisted in building the capacity of the Estonian competent national authorities and civil society actors upon request from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs by conducting a training activity on best practices in integration of migrants in line with the OSCE commitments in Tallinn in March 2015.

³ This publication can be found at <http://www.osce.org/odihr/98924>