

2018 Country Report for Estonia

Key points for EASPD members

I. Employment and Labour Market Policy

- Estonia's labour market has performed well, and employment and labour market participation have been high, but a falling labour supply imposes challenges.
- Backed by a favourable economic environment, unemployment has declined since 2010 and is currently among the lowest in the EU (6.8 % in 2016 and 6% in 2017).
- **Unemployment is expected to increase moderately in the coming years as the 'Work Ability' reform activates people with reduced ability for work who might not become employed immediately.**
- In the medium term, the working-age population is projected to shrink considerably.
- Regarding its national targets under the Europe 2020 strategy, Estonia met its employment rate target of 76%.

II. Education Policy

- Students possess a good level of basic skills.
- Tertiary educational attainment is above the EU average.
- The early school leaving rate remains high.
- Measures are underway to address the high drop-out rates in higher education.
- The performance gap between students of Estonian and Russian mother tongue remains important.
- Increasing the attractiveness of the teaching profession remains critical.

III. Social Policy

- The health status of Estonian people is improving but some challenges remain.
- Healthy life expectancy, preventable mortality and mortality from cardiovascular disease and cancer in Estonia are worse than the EU average.
- **A high level of unmet need for medical care is reported. This is caused by high waiting times for specialist care due to weak care coordination.**
- **The assessment of the patient pathways points to avoidable specialist treatment and hospitalisation in the current system.**



- Estonia faces challenges in relation to occupational health and access to healthcare.

IV. Anything else?

- The poverty risk among the older people has increased (largely because pensions have not kept pace with economic growth).
- The government is taking steps to address risks to the future sustainability of the pension system.
- The gender pay gap remains one of the highest in the EU despite some measures.
- Income inequality remains relatively high, despite recent improvements.
- The parental leave and benefits system will be made more flexible and will provide one month of leave exclusively for fathers.
- More childcare and day-care options for people with disabilities will be provided in 2018.
- The risk of poverty or social exclusion has been increasing overall since 2010 and reached the EU average of about 24 % in 2016.
- Risk of poverty or social exclusion for people with disabilities is high at 39.4 %.

Additional Information

- European Commission: 2018 Country Report for [Estonia](#)
- EASPD [Activities on the European Semester](#)

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