



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
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Excellency,

I have been following the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Republic of Estonia and welcome the constructive engagement of the Government of Estonia during the 38th session of the UPR Working Group in May 2021.

As the final outcome report on the review of Estonia was recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 48th session, I would like to take this opportunity to follow up on a number of areas raised in the two reports that my Office had prepared for the review of Estonia – the Compilation of United Nations information and the Summary of Stakeholders' submissions – which I consider in need of particular attention over the next four and a half years, until the next cycle of the UPR. In identifying those areas, I have considered the statements and recommendations made by 95 delegations and the presentation made and responses provided by the delegation of Estonia. I have also considered the actions taken by the Government of Estonia to implement the 142 recommendations supported during the second cycle of the UPR and welcome the announcement that noted recommendations were not disregarded completely but were subject to a further consideration. The aforementioned areas cover a range of issues, which appear in the annex to this letter.

I encourage Estonia to pursue efforts to ensure horizontal integration of people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, as well as to adopt the legal and policy measures to promote the acquisition of Estonian citizenship and to lower the number of persons with undetermined citizenship. My office stands ready to support Estonia's review of the Equal Treatment Act to widen the scope of its application to discrimination and of the Gender Equality Act, including to reduce gender pay gap.

I welcome the adoption of the human rights diplomacy action plan and encourage Estonia to implement it effectively in order to achieve concrete results in the areas highlighted in the annex to this letter and to facilitate preparations for the fourth cycle of the UPR. My advice to all Member States is to implement national action plans in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the Chancellor of Justice and all civil society organizations and, where necessary, with the support of international organizations, including my Office.

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Her Excellency
Ms. Eva-Maria LIIMETS
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Republic of Estonia



I also encourage Estonia to establish a national mechanism for comprehensive reporting and follow-up to recommendations received from all international and regional human rights mechanisms and to treaty obligations, linking them to the Sustainable Development Goals. To this end, I strongly recommend the use of the OHCHR practical guide on this topic, which is available at:

http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_16_1_NMRF_PracticalGuide.pdf

Please note that I am sharing my advice with all Member States as they go through the third cycle of the UPR with a view to assisting States with the implementation of the recommendations, following the review. One important measure that can positively contribute to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term reporting. Therefore, I strongly encourage all Member States to submit a voluntary mid-term report two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome report. In this regard, I welcome the practice of Estonia of submitting mid-term reports and encourage the Government of Estonia to continue with this practice and to submit a mid-term report on follow-up to the third cycle of the review by 2023.

As stated by the Secretary-General in his 2017 report on the work of the Organization (A/72/1, paragraph 98): *“The Human Rights Council’s universal periodic review process is now entering a new cycle, with every Member State scheduled for a third round of scrutiny. We will work to strengthen the relevance, precision and impact of the Council’s recommendations, including by providing better support to Member States in implementation, stronger collaboration with United Nations country teams and the establishment of national mechanisms for human rights reporting and follow-up to link the universal periodic review to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.”*

I look forward to discussing with you ways in which my Office may assist Estonia in relation to the areas identified in this letter and its annex.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Michelle Bachelet
High Commissioner for Human Rights

cc: H.E. Mr. Jonatan VSEVIOV
Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Estonia

Ms. Birgit VAN HOUT
Regional Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OHCHR Regional Office for Europe
Belgium

Annex

Scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies

- Ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.
- Ensuring that all State policies and programmes are compliant with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Ensuring regular visits to Estonia of the Special Procedures mandate-holders.

National human rights framework

- Strengthening the independence of the Chancellor of Justice.

Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

A. Cross-cutting issues

Equality and non-discrimination

- Reinforcing the legislative efforts against discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin, race or language, particularly in the areas of education and employment.
- Amending the Equal Opportunity Act to ensure it prohibits all forms of discrimination.

Development, the environment, and business and human rights

- Strengthening the efforts to further promote business and human rights.

B. Civil and political rights

Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law

- Taking measures in criminal law to ensure that reports of torture and ill-treatment are thoroughly investigated by an effective, independent and impartial body.

Prohibition of all forms of slavery

- Adopting effective measures to prevent and investigate cases of trafficking in human beings.

C. Economic, social and cultural rights

Right to health

- Developing a public health development plan.

Right to education

- Strengthening the measures to prevent school drop-outs.

D. Rights of specific persons or groups

Women

- Adopting the necessary measures to eliminate gender stereotypes and the pay gap.
- Adopting a comprehensive national strategy for gender equality and strengthening its mechanisms for the advancement of women.
- Taking further measures to eliminate violence against women, particularly domestic violence, and strengthening the provision of legal aid for the victims.

Children

- Continuing to develop Estonia's juvenile justice system in conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- Strengthening the efforts to combat violence against children.

Persons with disabilities

- Continuing the efforts to promote the rights of persons with disabilities.

Minorities

- Continuing the efforts to eliminate discrimination against minorities in all sectors.

Migrants

- Continuing the efforts made to provide migrants with better access to health, education and other social services.

Stateless persons

- Continuing the progress made in implementing national plans for the integration of stateless persons.