



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Estonian diaspora action plan for 2022–2025

Name of the action plan	Estonian diaspora
Period of the action plan	2022–2025
Objective of the action plan	Estonians located outside Estonia carry the Estonian identity and participate in Estonian social and cultural life. People who support and value Estonia help to shape a positive image of Estonia in the world, introduce its culture, and promote its economy and international relations. Return to Estonia is welcomed and supported to the necessary extent.
Main responsible party	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and foreign missions
Partners	The field of the Estonian diaspora is horizontal and the precondition for its effective functioning is good cooperation with other state agencies and the third sector, as well as a strong partnership with global Estonian communities.
Structure	<p>The Estonian diaspora action plan is divided into three main areas of activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting and preserving the Estonian identity abroad; • involving the global Estonian community in the life and development of Estonian society, promoting cooperation, and providing quality services; • supporting return to Estonia and (re)adaptation to Estonian life.

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Analysis of the situation

Estonia is one of the smallest countries in Europe, but it has a large and scattered diaspora, mainly as a result of three waves of emigration¹. It is estimated that there are up to 200,000 people with Estonian roots living abroad, accounting for approximately 15% of all Estonians. The largest communities are in Finland, Russia, the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, the United States, and Canada². However, it is important to understand that these communities are not homogeneous, but differ in terms of size, opportunities, and background. In addition, they all have different needs and expectations for the state.

The aim of the Estonian diaspora action plan is to strengthen ties with compatriots and friends of Estonia, thereby increase the cohesion of Estonian society and make Estonia bigger together, because the communities of compatriots and friends of Estonia are valuable cooperation partners for implementing jointly set goals.

The action plan involves Estonians living abroad in Estonian social and cultural life to a greater extent, protects their interests abroad, and supports their return and (re)adaptation to Estonia. Priority activities include teaching the Estonian language, preserving Estonian national culture, and bringing it to the wider world. In addition, opportunities will be created to engage with people and organisations that support and value Estonia in spreading a positive image of Estonia, as well as in boosting the Estonian economy and international relations. The creation of a common information space and cooperation with young people of Estonian origin living abroad are important. The action plan will also be used to develop a sense of unity – this has not been possible for decades due to the regime that was in place. The joint activities of foreign communities have played an important role in the restoration of the independence of Estonia and state-building, as well as in the preservation and development of Estonian culture, and this must be valued. Motivating and recognising the Estonian community living abroad is important here.

Historically, (central) Estonian organisations³ have played an important role in preserving and promoting the Estonian identity abroad. This has helped to preserve the intangible and material cultural heritage of Estonia in the host countries and to document it continuously even when generations have changed.

In addition to cultural organisations, congregations operating in communities have been and still are important carriers of Estonian cultural identity, ensuring the preservation of national identity through Estonian-language publishing, Estonian-language religious services, church choirs, and other community activities (e.g. language teaching in Sunday schools). All the above-mentioned activities will continue to need support from the state to ensure the preservation and promotion of the Estonian identity abroad.

Involving compatriot children and young people in activities that preserve Estonian cultural identity abroad and providing such opportunities to them needs additional attention, as the number of

¹ The first wave of emigration from Estonia took place eastwards in the middle of the nineteenth century, mainly due to economic reasons (but also the availability of higher education, etc.). The second massive emigration wave of refugees, driven by the events of World War II, was a largely forced escape to the West from the threat of the new occupation (also known as the Great Flight to the West of 1944). The third wave of emigration is related to the restoration of independence and accession of Estonia to the European Union, and the reasons for migration are mainly of an economic nature. Kaja Kumer-Haukanõmm, Keiu Telve. [Estonians in the world](#). – Estonian Human Development Report 2016/2017 'Estonia in the migration era'. Editor-in-Chief Tiit Tammaru.

² Number of Estonian citizens living abroad by country 1 January 2020. Population register.

³ Cultural, youth, educational, charity organisations, etc.

Estonian young people living and studying abroad has increased significantly in recent years⁴. It is necessary to create activities that offer young people more opportunities to connect their future with Estonia. Attention must also be paid to the needs of young people studying abroad by creating conditions for returning to Estonia after gaining experience abroad.

Compatriots and friends of Estonia are the representatives of Estonia in the world, helping to introduce Estonia and strengthen economic and cultural ties. The Estonian community living abroad includes many socially active people who can and want to contribute to the preservation and development of Estonian cultural identity abroad. They can be useful in creating a positive image of Estonia, for example by introducing Estonia as a potential tourist destination or a suitable investment and business environment. They can provide information about Estonian culture and its international impact, as well as Estonian society and politics in general. Compatriots can actively stimulate foreign relations abroad and influence the politics, public opinion, and international relations of their host country. A systematic communication of the state with the Estonian community living abroad contributes to a more effective use of the existing potential of compatriots, thereby increasing their self-awareness, sense of security, and value in the eyes of their homeland. Estonian foreign missions across the globe are crucial in this communication, often being the primary point of contact with the state.

The number of returnees to Estonia increased in the years before the pandemic. Most people still move between Estonia and Finland, but for several years in a row, the number of people moving from Finland to Estonia exceeded the number of people moving from Estonia to Finland⁵. There are few specific services for returnees that would support their return to and (re)adaptation to life in Estonia. Returnees, who often come here with their children and families, directly contribute to the development and continuation of the Estonian population. This needs to be supported at national, local, and community levels. It is necessary to create convenient opportunities that have social support in the form of positive attitudes, because the lack of support for returnees prevents people with the necessary skills and knowledge from returning and staying here.

Promoting a common space for information and communication will help to achieve all of the above. A common information space brings together and connects the global Estonian communities and those working for preserving Estonian cultural identity abroad. Multilingualism must also be taken into account when promoting the common information space – the information must be available in at least Estonian, English, and Russian.

Preserving and developing Estonian cultural identity abroad is a priority issue for the state, because Estonians abroad and friends of Estonia are the people who simultaneously preserve and perpetuate Estonianness and act as representatives of Estonia all over the world. In order to promote and support it, the 'Estonian diaspora action plan for 2022–2025' was prepared, which is part of the 'Foreign Policy Programme 2022–2025' and contributes to achieving the goals of the current 'Foreign Policy Strategy 2030' and the forthcoming 'Cohesive Estonian Development Plan 2030'. The Estonian state has previously supported compatriots living abroad through the compatriots' programmes in 2004–2008, 2009–2013, and 2014–2020⁶.

⁴ [There are fewer young people everywhere except Harju County](#) . News of Statistics Estonia of 6 July 2020.

⁵ Press release No 59 of Statistics Estonia of 12 May 2020 '[Immigration helped increase population](#)'.

⁶ See the [compatriots' programmes](#) on the website of the Ministry of Education and Research.

MEASURE 1: Promoting and preserving the Estonian identity abroad

Objective

Estonians living abroad carry the Estonian identity – this means guaranteeing a common and diverse information space, the viability of Estonian culture abroad, the expansion of opportunities to learn the Estonian language, and the preservation of the intellectual and material cultural heritage of Estonia.

Analysis of the situation

Common information space

A common information space is important for bringing together and integrating the global Estonian communities and those who contribute to and want to contribute to the preservation of Estonian cultural identity abroad, including Estonian state organisations, volunteers, and professional networks. Estonian communities around the world and their organisations have been active for decades – there are many different networks and information channels, including online publications; however, the information and communication channels are fragmented and there is no comprehensive central online network. The exchange of information between communities on practical issues of everyday life, such as work, moving to Estonia, consular issues, language learning, summer camps for children in Estonia, etc., could be smoother. The exchange of information between the state and its communities is especially crucial during crises, and its importance was particularly evident in the coronavirus pandemic that intensified in 2020.

The first steps have been taken to solve these problems, such as the further development of the Global Estonian portal, the launch of the monthly Global Estonian newsletter, and the creation of networks that bring together a variety of interests and information (Global Estonian Business Network on LinkedIn)⁷. In early 2021, the popular weekly radio show *Hajala ringvaade* dedicated to Estonian foreign communities was launched on Vikerraadio.

A lot of information exchange in communities takes place through the activities of (central) organisations. (Central) organisations of compatriots have always played and still play an important role in the exchange of information between communities and the state⁸.

Modern digital technology makes it possible to be a part of the Estonian information space regardless of where the person is located. Historically, however, the newspapers of compatriot communities have helped to preserve and promote Estonian cultural identity abroad, to unite people, and to relay necessary information to the communities. In 2019, 26 newspapers for compatriot communities were published⁹. The press is digitising and the number of newspapers published on paper is falling. As the need for information exchange still exists in the communities of compatriots, it is necessary to contribute to the survival and development of the information media of communities and global Estonianness. To ensure this, an annual support programme was launched in 2020 to support the publications of Estonian communities abroad.

⁷ More information on the solutions in the information space can also be found in the subchapter on economic cooperation.

⁸ For example, the Estonian World Council, the Association of Estonians in Sweden, the Estonian American National Council, the Estonian Central Council in Canada, etc.

⁹ According to the National Library of Estonia (2019).

Informal networks, i.e. means to communicate in various social media networks, are also an important channel for communication and information exchange among compatriots¹⁰.

Promoting and preserving Estonian culture

The priorities of the cultural policy for Estonians living abroad are to maintain linguistic and cultural ties with compatriots and to support the cultural societies of compatriots. High-level cultural events organised in Estonian foreign communities support the preservation and promotion of Estonian identity. The success of Estonia is supported by contacts with Estonian artists, cultural collectives, and cultural figures (cultural producers), organisations (organisers), and consumers (audience, media, and marketing) abroad, as well as effective communication in Estonian, Russian, and English through various media to enhance information exchange and create interest among compatriots and friends of Estonia in what is happening in Estonian society. Cultural societies help to maintain contacts with compatriot centres and the Estonian state, local governments, cultural organisations, and non-governmental organisations. Estonian communities outside Estonia have an important role to play because they carry Estonian language and culture, and introduce Estonia in their host countries.

Regular meetings – Global Estonian Cultural Days (ESTO)¹¹, song festivals, forest universities, conferences, and other events – contribute to cultural cooperation with compatriots. Cooperation is also supported by the activities of cultural societies and collectives, for example, encouraging the national choirs and dance groups of compatriots to take part in the Estonian Song and Dance Celebration, and supporting the creative collaboration and joint activities of cultural figures from Estonia and foreign communities. All of the above contributes to the motivation necessary for preserving the Estonian culture and its intangible cultural heritage and maintaining a social network between different generations of compatriots. In addition to keeping historic and traditional gatherings alive, new types of (major) events need to be organised, all of which help to maintain a sense of belonging. A good example of this is the tradition of regular virtual forums initiated in 2021 for Estonians living abroad. Various events organised by foreign missions (e.g. celebrating Independence Day) also help to ensure a sense of unity.

Expanding and diversifying opportunities to learn the Estonian language¹²

In recent years, many children and young people have left Estonia who could return to Estonia at some stage in their lives, which includes participating in the local education system. The problem is that in most cases, while living abroad, children and parents lose their connections to Estonia's educational institutions, and they stop learning Estonian as the mother tongue on the basis of the Estonian curriculum.

Research shows that children from families who have returned to Estonia have difficulty adapting to the education system, and this is mainly related to their lack of Estonian language skills¹³. In order to increase and facilitate return migration and maintain Estonian cultural identity abroad, it is important to expand and diversify the opportunities for learning Estonian abroad in general education schools, Sunday schools, kindergartens, and societies, as well as in the online Global School of Estonian children

¹⁰ For example, Facebook groups that bring together Estonians from different countries (Estonians in Finland, America, etc.).

¹¹ ESTO, or Global Estonian Cultural Days, is a global gathering of Estonians initiated by compatriots, which takes place every four years. The first ESTO took place in 1972 in Toronto, Canada.

¹² Activities of the 'Estonian Language Strategy 2021–2035'.

¹³ [Impact study on the compatriots' programme](#): final report 2015. Merli Aksen, Kertu Aruoja, Kadri Lees, and others. Tartu. Centre for Applied Social Sciences at the University of Tartu and the Baltic Research Institute.

living abroad¹⁴. Teaching Estonian language and cultural history, as well as other subjects in Estonian, helps to maintain and develop Estonian language skills in the schools and communities of compatriots and to create an opportunity for young people to continue their studies in the Estonian education system in the future.

As language learning in the language environment gives the best results, it is necessary to increase the number of language camps and youth exchanges for compatriot children in Estonia – so far, the state has been able to offer the opportunity to participate to about two thirds of the applicants.

There is also a growing need for modern learning materials that take into account the differences of compatriot communities. The mechanism for creating such textbooks already exists in Estonia¹⁵, but communities are not widely aware of these opportunities and therefore, the availability of information needs to be improved. A variety of digital solutions would also encourage language learning, both for refresher training for teachers and for the continuous updating of learning materials. There is a clear need to diversify the training opportunities for Estonian language teachers and to offer them methodological support, as many teachers who teach abroad do not have the professional qualification of a teacher. Here, a good solution is learning the Estonian language online, which is being developed by the Integration Foundation.

Preserving the cultural heritage of Estonian communities abroad

Meaningful (voluntary) work with historical heritage is one way for foreign communities to preserve and promote Estonian cultural identity abroad. It is essential to collect, preserve, make available, and research the intangible and tangible cultural heritage of compatriots. The cultural heritage of foreign Estonian communities includes archives (archival documents, photographs, audiovisual publications), oral tradition (folklore, biographies and memoirs, musical tradition, etc.), publications, language collections, art, material heritage, and places of historical significance (monuments, tombstones, cemeteries). The activities and the spiritual and material cultural heritage of compatriot communities are systematically documented and largely preserved with the support of community members. The archives of Estonian communities¹⁶ abroad are located at several Estonian organisations abroad, in Estonian Houses, as well as in special archival institutions (Estonian archives in Australia, the USA, Canada, and Sweden). They are the basis for the development of four main centres¹⁷, each with a different direction and future prospects.

1. In Toronto, there are plans to implement an expansion plan and build an archive centre and the VEMU Estonian Museum Canada, at the Estonian Studies Centre. It would bring together two large archives:

(a) the archives and library of the VEMU (former archives and library of the Tartu Institute¹⁸); and

¹⁴ A good example is the [Global School](#), an online school for Estonian children living outside Estonia. The school started admitting students in 2013 and in the 2021–2022 academic year, it had 240 students from 31 countries. The school is managed by the Estonian Language Education Society operating in Finland.

¹⁵ All places that teach Estonian abroad can order high-quality teaching materials in Estonian to conduct their studies. The orders are submitted by the [Estonian Institute](#) once a year and the materials are available in a digital ordering environment.

¹⁶ The following Estonian memory institutions have the largest number of collections of foreign Estonian communities: the National Archives, the Estonian Literary Museum, the Estonian National Museum, the Estonian Theatre and Music Museum, the Consistory of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Tallinn University Academic Library, and the University of Tartu Library.

¹⁷ There is also the Estonian Archives in Vancouver, as well as some smaller groups.

¹⁸ The Tartu Institute operates at the Tartu College in Toronto. The institute was founded in 1971.

(b) the Estonian Central Archives in Canada.

2. The Estonian Archives in the United States constantly preserves and collects material, even today, but due to lack of space, more than 600 collections have been deposited with the Immigration History Research Centre (IHRC, Minneapolis).

3. The Estonian Archives in Australia has agreed that materials relating to Australian Estonians will be transferred to the National Archives of Australia if the community can no longer preserve them.

4. The archives committee of the Association of Estonians in Sweden collects, systematises, and forwards the collections to various storage facilities, concluding agreements with memory institutions in Estonia or Sweden. The collection of the Baltic Archive has been deposited in the National Archives of Sweden and is available with the permission of the Head of the Baltic Archive.

It is important to ensure the preservation of the cultural heritage collected so far. Therefore, it is necessary to be aware of what is happening in the communities and to achieve stable funding for the archive centres of Estonian communities abroad. Estonia's national memory institutions must be prepared to react quickly if there is a need to rescue collections kept in emergency conditions or in danger of destruction. It is also important to address the issue of burial sites of high-ranking statesmen abroad and the historical cemeteries of the Estonian community¹⁹. There is currently no clear national coordination for the identification and maintenance of graves (this is done, to some extent, by Estonian foreign missions or communities).

The support and development of networks for the collection and preservation of cultural heritage needs further attention. Documented information, audiovisual material, collections of objects and publications, and oral traditions have been preserved in various parts of the world. Gaining an overview of all of them and sharing information about what has been preserved has so far taken place in close cooperation between memory institutions in Estonia and abroad through the NGO Baltic Heritage Network²⁰ (BaltHerNet) and the portal it manages.

Making archival heritage available requires a great deal of resources, such as time, money, and digital literacy²¹. Memory institutions in Estonia and the host countries need more support to improve access to the collections and thereby bring new information about Estonians abroad to the cultural and academic community. In order to facilitate the availability of the collections, compatriot communities have the opportunity to use the environments developed by the National Archives to open the contents of the archives.

It is also important to include the cultural heritage stored by modern means in its source environment and to include representatives of the younger generations, who are not as well organised as the older generations, in its collection. It is necessary to be aware of the changes and to pass on the skills for preserving the heritage stored on new information media. From the point of view of the continuity of the preservation of the intangible and material cultural heritage of Estonia, it is crucial to ensure the continuous documentation of the heritage to the same extent and level even as generations change.

Providing religious services to compatriots

¹⁹ For example, in Pechory.

²⁰ NGO Baltic Heritage Network. The network was set up in January 2008, with Latvian and Lithuanian working groups also starting work. The [BaltHerNet](#) portal provides information on the content, locations, responsible organisations, and professional know-how of Estonian cultural heritage collections.

²¹ Due to the limited budget of the compatriots' programme in the field of archives so far, almost two thirds of the projects have been funded only partially (to a lesser extent) almost every year.

Religious identity has historically been an important part of national identity, especially in historical Estonian communities. Lutheran congregations were often the first organisations of Estonians and will probably remain the last social organisations of Estonians in those areas where communities are aging and shrinking. At the same time, congregations have an important role to play in maintaining and carrying national identities and in celebrating national anniversaries, both through worship and other religious activities, as well as through choirs and other cultural activities. Religious services require both attention and recognition, as well as financial support for this purpose.

Religious services for compatriots living abroad have been predominantly provided by the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church and these services are financially supported by the Ministry of the Interior. The Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church conducts services and other religious services for Estonian communities in Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Belgium (Brussels), and Russia (including Pechory). Before the pandemic, in 2019, 68 services were held annually at 11 geographical locations (11 in Riga, 10 in Helsinki, 1 in Vilnius, 3 in London, 4 in Brussels, 24 in St Petersburg, 11 in Pechory, 1 in Moscow, as well as in Siberia – 1 in Upper Suetuk, 1 in Orava village, and 1 in Kasekese village). Due to limited budgets, no services were held in Sochi, Sukhumi, and Crimea. The provision of religious services in host countries has been complicated by travel restrictions during the pandemic. This has led the activities of the diaspora of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church to new destinations (e.g. London, Sweden, Helsinki, and Canada).

In addition to the aforementioned religious services, Estonian-language Lutheran services have been held in Sweden, the United States, Canada, and Australia, where various Lutheran congregations, including the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, have organised services. Religious services are also provided in Estonian in the Pentecostal and Baptist congregations in Sweden.

MEASURE 1

Activities contributing to the objectives

Important supporting activities	Responsible party	Performed by	Partner	Year
Organising and designing a common information and communication space	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Integration Foundation	Ministry of Culture	2022–2025
Cross-media projects supporting a common information space (e.g. weekly radio show on ERR (Estonian Public Broadcasting))	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	ERR		2022–2025
Support for publications of foreign communities	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	National Foundation of Civil Society		2022–2025
Implementing the calls for proposals supporting the cultural societies of Estonian communities abroad	Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Integration Foundation	Ministry of Education and Research, Estonian Folk Dance and Folk Music Association, Estonian Choral Association	2022–2025
Organising contact seminars and cultural events for young people of Estonian origin	Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Culture	Integration Foundation, Estonian Institute		2022–2025
Supporting ESTO 2025	Ministry of Foreign Affairs			2025
Promoting a sense of belonging between compatriots and permanent residents of Estonia (preserving and celebrating a common memory) ²²	Ministry of Foreign Affairs		Ministry of Culture, Estonian Institute, Association of Estonian Cultural Societies, Vabamu Museum, compatriot communities	2022–2025
Supporting the learning of the Estonian language and learning in Estonian in places of study abroad	Ministry of Education and Research	Estonian Institute		2022–2025

²² The activity is under development.

Creating and providing study materials in Estonian to places of study abroad	Ministry of Education and Research	Estonian Institute		2022–2025
Training Estonian language and culture teachers working abroad	Ministry of Education and Research	Estonian Institute		2022–2025
Support for practising the Estonian language in the language environment for Estonian children and young people living abroad	Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Integration Foundation	MTÜ HeadEst	2022–2025
Supporting the study of young people from Estonia in Estonia	Ministry of Education and Research	Education and Youth Board (HARNO)		2022–2025
Implementing the call for proposals for projects supporting the preservation of cultural heritage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collecting, digitising, and making available cultural heritage; • posting Estonian memory institution specialists to communities and community counselling; • supporting and developing Estonian community cultural heritage centres and cooperation networks; • organising conferences, seminars, and trainings in foreign communities and in Estonia; • supporting sectoral studies and publishing publications. 	Ministry of Education and Research	National Archives		2022–2025
Identifying and maintaining the burial sites of high-ranking state figures abroad ²³	Ministry of Foreign Affairs		Foreign missions, compatriot communities, etc.	2023–2025
Providing religious services to compatriots in their host countries	Ministry of the Interior, church governments of the	Clergy of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church and the	Local congregations, foreign missions	2022–2025

²³ The activity is under development and the responsible parties and partners are not yet known.

	Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Estonian Christian Pentecostal Church, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Estonian Christian Pentecostal Church		
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MEASURE 2: Involving the global Estonian community in the life and development of Estonian society, promoting cooperation, and providing quality services

Objective

The ties of Estonia with the Estonian community living abroad and friends of Estonia will be strengthened by expanding the services offered and improving their quality, increasing their contribution to the development of society.

Analysis of the situation

High-quality consular services and the growing role of foreign missions in engaging with the local Estonian community

The demand for public services in Estonian foreign missions is growing every year among Estonians living abroad (Figure 2). On the one hand, it is important to involve the Estonian community living elsewhere in the development and social life of Estonia, but on the other hand, high-quality, convenient, and accessible consular services must be ensured for all those who want and need help.

The most frequently used service by Estonian citizens abroad is to apply for identity documents (passport and ID-card) at a foreign mission and to receive them at a foreign mission or honorary consul's office (Figure 3). Over the years, Estonia has been proud of its e-governance image and achievements in this field. However, although it is possible to apply for a passport in the e-environment, if more than six years have elapsed since applying for the previous passport and giving fingerprints, the person must still go to the foreign mission in person to provide fingerprints²⁴. Passports and ID-cards also mostly need to be picked up from a foreign mission or honorary consul. Given our small network of foreign missions and a large community of compatriots, for many people this means travelling within their host country and often even to another country. This leads to undue inconvenience and excessive costs. During the emergency situation caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent 534 passports to Estonian citizens using a secure postal service as part of a pilot project. It is therefore prudent to ensure that identity documents could be issued as an intermediary service even in normal circumstances.

The second most frequently used service among consular operations is the issuance of an e-resident's digital identity card (hereinafter: e-resident's card). To receive an e-resident's card, the applicant must personally apply at an Estonian foreign mission, a service office of an external service provider, or the service office of the Police and Border Guard Board. This means that in many host countries with significant investment and economic potential for Estonia, potential e-residents who meet the interest profile of Estonia find obtaining an e-resident's card inconvenient, as it requires them to travel. The Ministry of the Interior and the Police and Border Guard Board, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, and Estonian Business and Innovation Agency, are working to make it easier to issue e-resident's cards in cooperation with an external service provider. Five service offices that issue the cards have already been opened – in Tokyo, São Paulo, Johannesburg, Bangkok, and Singapore – and the mapping of new locations is ongoing, with more service offices planned to be opened in up to 15 countries in the near future.

A more convenient way for the foreign community to apply for and receive identity documents must be ensured in cooperation with the relevant authorities. In order to offer high-quality consular

²⁴ Activities of the 'Internal Security Strategy 2020–2030'.

services, it is necessary to digitise these services as much as possible and to ensure their user-friendliness, as well as to develop consular services with the needs of Estonians in the host country in mind. Achieving this goal will require a joint effort by several ministries and agencies.

Based on the consular work practice of foreign missions, Estonians living abroad are not sufficiently aware of the available e-services and sometimes it is not possible for them to use these services. Therefore, it is necessary to increase the awareness of Estonians living abroad about e-services, but also about the benefits of owning an ID-card, as the ID-card makes using consular services more convenient for them. In order to raise awareness of e-services, information on all available services needs to be brought together in one environment, creating a single online portal. The issuance of a digital reader with an identity card in foreign missions encourages a wider use of e-services (the same applies to the issuance of an e-resident’s card). The wider use of the Estonian digital ID²⁵ among Estonians living abroad also brings them closer to Estonia.

Consular operations in 2013–2019

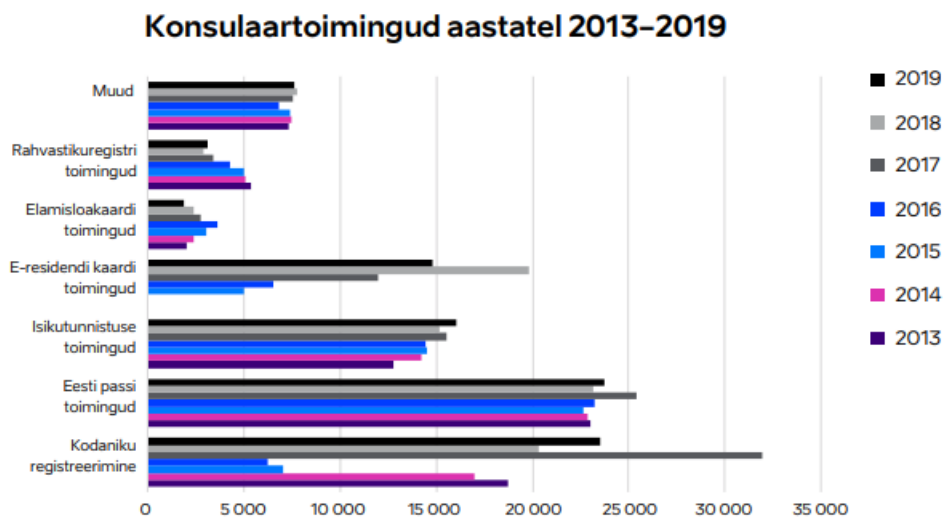


Figure 2. Number of different consular operations (source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Other

Population register operations

Residence card operations

E-resident’s card operations

Identity document operations

Estonian passport operations

Citizen registration

²⁵ Estonian digital ID or ID-card or digital identity card.

Consular operations in foreign missions in 2019

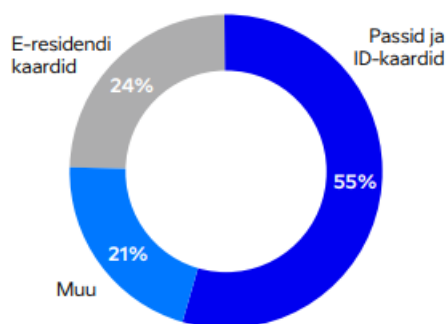


Figure 3. Proportion of consular operations in foreign missions in 2019 (source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Grey – E-resident’s cards

Dark blue – Passports and ID-cards

Light blue – Other

Promoting citizens’ initiative and citizen diplomacy

Estonians leaving to live abroad entails both problems and opportunities. However, it is important to maintain close contacts with them and to actively involve them in the life and development of Estonian society through citizen diplomacy and in other ways. Citizen diplomats also include all friends of Estonia who, through their work and activities, encourage the development of Estonia and contribute to the good reputation of Estonia in the world.

Volunteering plays a significant role in the successful operation of citizen diplomacy, so it is important to motivate and recognise the active Estonian community living abroad and friends of Estonia. When promoting citizen diplomacy, it is crucial to keep in mind that the opportunities and needs of Estonians living elsewhere vary greatly from region to region, and the common denominator is that all Estonians abroad need attention and engagement.

Estonian foreign missions are the primary point of contact in communicating with Estonians living abroad²⁶ – they preserve and strengthen Estonian cultural identity abroad, disseminate information to the community of compatriots, establish contacts, and support communication and meetings. In addition, foreign missions can contribute to the establishment of Estonian societies in countries where they do not yet exist, and encourage the further development of existing societies by finding new opportunities for them to promote the development of the Estonian state. In order to achieve these goals, there is a need for systematic and more meaningful and consistent communication between foreign missions and Estonian communities. One way to do this is for foreign missions to organise regular events for the Estonian community (celebrating Independence Day, etc.).

A satisfaction survey conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2020 confirms the growing desire of Estonians living abroad to play their part in supporting the development of Estonian society and the good image of the country while living abroad. This is evidenced by the charitable activities organised

²⁶[Estonian Foreign Policy Strategy 2030](#)

by Estonian foreign communities²⁷, such as the creation of various support funds and donations, as well as athletes of Estonian origin who live abroad but choose to represent the Estonian state.

Engaging with Estonian young people living abroad

Many young people of Estonian origin integrate into the society of their host country, and because their proficiency in the Estonian language deteriorates, their connection with the Estonian cultural space decreases, and as a result, their Estonian identity may be lost. There is a tendency that children and young people from compatriot communities are left out of activities that help preserve Estonian cultural identity abroad. This makes it more difficult for them to link their future to Estonia.

The implementation of the ideas of young people needs to be supported to use their enthusiasm and leadership potential to preserve Estonian cultural identity abroad. A good example is the Global Estonian Youth Network established in 2019 as a result of ESTO 2019. The network organises various activities involving young people²⁸. Even more young people need to be involved in activities that would help them implement initiatives that support the preservation of Estonian cultural identity abroad²⁹.

Estonian students studying abroad face unique choices. On the one hand, they gain a lot of new experience and knowledge while living abroad, but on the other hand, due to their years spent away from Estonia, they lose a lot of social contacts in Estonia that would make it easier for them to return and enter the Estonian labour market. The state should pay more attention to keeping in touch with young people who choose to study abroad and offer them more career and participation opportunities to encourage them to return. This would facilitate the decision to return home after completing their studies abroad. The experiences of people of Estonian origin who have lived and studied abroad make Estonia stronger and help meet the labour market needs of the state. In addition, Estonians studying abroad today help to create opportunities for future cooperation between Estonia and foreign countries thanks to their academic, professional, and social networks, as personal contacts with Estonia engender trust. Development activities must be carried out to make it easier for students from Estonia studying in other countries to enter the Estonian internship and labour market. It would also provide the state with a better overview for forecasting its training needs and alleviating labour shortages.

Contributing to the internationalisation of Estonian culture

In order to contribute to the internationalisation of Estonian culture, even more cooperation is needed with compatriot communities – organising cultural events abroad helps introduce Estonia and promote cultural diplomacy. The most important regular events related to compatriot communities are the Estonian Cultural Days in New York, the West Coast Estonian Days, the Estonian Music Week EstDocs in Toronto, ESTIVAL in Sweden, Martin Markkinat in Helsinki, the Estonian Cultural Days in Annaberg, Bonn, the Estonian Film Days in Munich, etc. Organisers of Estonian cultural events abroad try to involve the local community both as the organisers and the audience. The success of Estonia is also supported by contacts with Estonian artists, cultural groups, and cultural figures (cultural producers), organisations (organisers), and consumers (audience, media, and marketing) abroad.

²⁷ Private donation by Olga Kistler-Ritso to the Vabamu Museum of Occupations and Freedom (formerly the Museum of Occupations), several charity projects by Aino Järvesoo, donations by Vilhelm Fischmann to the Tartu Cultural Endowment, donation by the Randpalus to Tallinn Children's Hospital, etc.

²⁸ For example, virtual days for young people with Estonian roots took place in the spring of 2020, with the participation of young people of Estonian origin from 28 countries around the world.

²⁹ These initiatives include various projects and ideas – e.g. youth conferences, gatherings, etc.

Seven Estonian foreign missions (Berlin, Brussels, Helsinki, Paris, Moscow, New York, and London) currently have cultural attachés. The Estonian Institute has branches in Helsinki, Budapest, and, from the autumn of 2021, also in Stockholm. If possible, the network of cultural attachés and branches of the Estonian Institute should be expanded.

Economic cooperation

Estonia is a country with an open economy, but the Estonian market alone is small and therefore, the share of exports in the economy plays a major role. Foreign investment is also an important prerequisite for the economic development of the state. The involvement of compatriots as local cooperation partners, who help to bring investments to Estonia or Estonian companies in general, and the involvement of community members in Estonian export policy contribute to the above. The role of the state in the development of cooperation with business organisations operating at home and abroad and in the involvement of Estonians abroad in business diplomacy activities (by including compatriots in business delegation visits, creating a network of compatriot entrepreneurs, etc.) is important here.

So far, the involvement of compatriots in business diplomacy activities has not been systematic and has rather depended on how active Estonian foreign missions are in their contacts with the community and in creating a business network. In early 2021, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made the involvement of global Estonians in strengthening the Estonian economy one of its important areas of activity. Thus, the Business Diplomacy Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, together with the innovation team mentor of the Government Office, the Ministry of Culture, the Estonian Business and Innovation Agency, and HARNO, has participated in a project of the innovation programme of the Government Office aimed at involving Estonians living abroad in business diplomacy and in strengthening the Estonian economy.

The state has separately been involved in supporting companies in foreign markets as well as in the cultural and identity policy of global Estonia, but combining the two has been a significant untapped resource so far. In cooperation with various parties, the innovation project team has developed proposals for an improved involvement of Estonian foreign communities through the following instruments.

- The development of digital technology makes it possible to use various solutions in the diaspora policy and create new employment opportunities, including engaging with Estonians living abroad through online channels. The Global Estonian website of the Integration Foundation portal is being developed and continuously updated, and a business sub-page has been added, listing essential contacts around the world, and providing information on business opportunities and subscribing to newsletters and joining the business network. The goal of the globalestonian.com portal is to be a virtual cooperation platform for Estonians living in Estonia and abroad that speaks to the global Estonian community as well as people living in Estonia, and helps to expand cooperation networks that support the development of Estonia, communicate the messages of the state and clarify diaspora policy goals, and contributes to the recognition and awareness of the contribution of expatriate Estonians in Estonia.
- The monthly Global Estonian newsletter brings together Estonian news of interest for Estonians living outside Estonia, information about events and state services, success stories about Estonians, and information about options for participating in business diplomacy.
- The LinkedIn group Global Estonian Business Network (GEBN) is a digital business network where the specialty and location of the participants can be viewed (information provided by

LinkedIn). The GEBN brings together business-oriented Estonians abroad and exporting companies. The virtual discussion group on global Estonia is a regular thematic discussion where Estonians abroad and Estonian entrepreneurs meet. The goals of the event are to make active Estonians more visible to Estonian exporting entrepreneurs, to create a dialogue between entrepreneurs and Estonian foreign communities, to inspire Estonians living abroad to follow the example of other active Estonians in supporting Estonian companies, and to create opportunities for networking.

- The Introwise platform created by Estonians allows entrepreneurs to book effective virtual meetings with global Estonians who have joined the platform. Estonians living abroad can offer counselling sessions based on their motivation and ability, either free of charge or for a fee. The platform provides an effective way to quickly and conveniently contact a representative in the required field or region.
- Engaging with Estonian nationals through embassy service design. The exchange of documents is where Estonians who have been 'invisible' to come into contact with the state. During the summer of 2021, the foreign missions of the countries with the largest Estonian communities tried to engage with the Estonian community during the provision of consular services, inviting them to join the Global Estonian newsletter. These embassies are Estonian missions or consulates in Stockholm, Copenhagen, Brussels, London, New York, Toronto, and Canberra.

MEASURE 2

Activities contributing to the objectives

Important supporting activities	Responsible party	Performed by	Partner	Year
Awareness-raising activities on the possibilities of using e-services	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, foreign missions	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Information System Authority	2022
Embassies also issue digital readers with ID-cards to promote the use of e-environments	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2022
Issuing ID-cards in Estonia and Finland through an intermediary and delivery of travel documents abroad by courier	Ministry of the Interior	Police and Border Guard Board, foreign missions	Police and Border Guard Board, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2022
Providing consular services during consular missions until the opening of service offices of an external service provider and developing e-service solutions	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Police and Border Guard Board, Enterprise Estonia	Up to 2025
Organising regular forums for global Estonians	Ministry of Foreign Affairs			2022–2025
Promoting a culture of recognition	Ministries			2022–2025
Promoting diaspora cooperation with other countries	Ministry of Foreign Affairs		Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Research	2022–2025
Developing and supporting networks of promoters of citizen diplomacy (cultural representatives, entrepreneurs, honorary consuls in business diplomacy, etc.)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture		Enterprise Estonia, Estonian Institute	2022–2025
Implementing projects supporting the internationalisation of Estonian culture	Ministry of Culture	Foreign missions	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Enterprise Estonia, Estonian Institute	2022–2025
Scholarship for an internship programme in Estonia	Ministry of Foreign Affairs			2022–2025
Support programme for initiatives	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Integration Foundation		2022–2025

Development activities to engage with Estonian students studying in other countries				2023–2025
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MEASURE 3: Supporting return to Estonia and (re)adaptation to Estonian life

Objective

Returning to and staying in Estonia is supported

Analysis of the situation

Return

According to Statistics Estonia, 7,000–8,500 Estonian citizens returned to Estonia per year in 2015–2019. This exceeded the number of emigrants³⁰. According to official statistics, the return to Estonia decreased slightly in 2020, but it can still be said that moving back to Estonia has intensified in recent years³¹.

To support this trend, it is necessary to further develop a systemic approach with support services. It is important that returning is supported at the national, local, and community levels, as a lack of support can reduce the desire of a person to come back to Estonia and stay here. Dissemination of information is also very important, as information on the support services provided must be easy for everyone to find and access.

Returnees decide to move back to Estonia for very different reasons. Almost half of the returnees (45%) have stated that the reason for returning to Estonia is the desire to live in their country of origin, where they feel at home. For many (35%), the reason for returning is joining a family, getting married, or caring for a family member. In recent years, the returnees have also been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in their decisions.

Providing and developing services supporting return

A number of long-term services supporting primary adaptation and integration are offered from the state budget as well as from EU external instruments to residents of other nationalities, newly arrived immigrants, as well as compatriots and returnees to help them succeed in Estonian society. If we look at these target groups, the options of returnees are the most limited in terms of access to support services, as few services have been developed specifically for supporting their return and adaptation in Estonia³².

Most of the adaptation and integration services provided by the state for newly arrived immigrants and less integrated residents could also be applied to returnees. However, funding for such services is

³⁰ [Overview of migration statistics 2015–2019](#)

* From the point of view of the development of the field, it is important that the statistical indicators used as a basis for policy-making provide the best possible overview of the real situation. However, it has become apparent that the index-based migration statistics of Statistics Estonia may not provide a definitive overview of the actual number of returnees, as the change in methodology significantly increased the number of people in migration in 2015, but no quality assessment has been carried out on this methodology yet. In addition, there are currently no statistics on the length of time spent abroad (duration of migration and its change over time), which does not allow an adequate estimate of the actual number of returnees. The data underlying our policy-making may not be sufficient to meet the needs of the target group.

³¹ Overview of migration statistics 2016–2020.

³² The Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Culture analysed state-funded services for returnees, low-integrated residents, and newly arrived immigrants based on 2018 data. 'Analysis and proposals for the development of services offered to returnees, compatriots living outside Estonia, and newly arrived immigrants'.

a bottleneck, as adaptation and integration services are funded from external sources³³, but services for returnees cannot be funded by EU support (citizenship issue – returnees are not eligible). Therefore, it is necessary to find additional money primarily from the state budget to develop services for returnees.

It must be taken into account in service organisation (service design) that different target groups are not homogeneous. There are people with different levels of education, age, and other characteristics among returnees, permanent residents of other nationalities, and newly arrived immigrants. This must be taken into account when developing and providing services to ensure the effectiveness of the services themselves as well as adaptation and integration policies more broadly³⁴. In the case of returnees, an attentive and systematic approach to all family members is important. The following state services for a smoother return have been developed so far: information on the Integration Foundation website in three languages, both online and virtual counselling, needs-based return support, group experience meetings, and language learning. There are also support services for returnees attending basic school in general education schools.

Necessary developments

Almost all returnees feel good in Estonia and most also see their future as connected to Estonia³⁵. However, the 'Estonian Integration Monitoring 2020' report showed that only 8% of those who returned to Estonia had used state support services, whereas only a quarter needed absolutely no help adapting to Estonian life³⁶.

One of the key areas of action required is the availability of information – information on return support services is often obtained through a personal network and returnees do not know about state support. The lack of separate services in local governments is considered problematic.

Returning to and adapting to life in Estonia, especially when coming back here with a family, is a very costly process. Therefore, greater financial support could be provided for families with children who return to Estonia from more distant countries.

Multicultural families often have trouble settling in Estonia due to social attitudes. There is a tendency that if a partner or spouse from another cultural space does not adapt to life in Estonia after coming here with their family, they will leave Estonia again.

There is also a tendency that children aged 15–19 who return to live in Estonia with their families do not have sufficient support in language learning, as well as in forming friendships and general adaptation, as minor family members have often never lived in Estonia. Lack of knowledge of the Estonian language may, in turn, prevent them from going to upper secondary school or university³⁷.

Returnees who have lived away from Estonia for a very long time may have mental health problems when re-adapting. Moving and adapting to a new place is very stressful, and people can have health problems that can affect their ability to work. It is also difficult to quickly build a new network and find local friends.

³³ External funds include the structural funds of the EU budget period 2014–2020 (mainly the ESF, but also the ERF) and the funds of the AMIF.

³⁴ 'Analysis and proposals for the development of services offered to returnees, compatriots living outside Estonia, and newly arrived immigrants'.

³⁵ Estonian Integration Monitoring 2020.

³⁶ Estonian Integration Monitoring 2020.

³⁷ Study of the Ministry of Education and Research to be completed in 2021.

Several studies³⁸ have also identified a lack of digital literacy as a problem, mostly in the older generation, especially as many services are only available digitally in Estonia.

Citizens who have worked outside Estonia for a long time are not covered by the social guarantees provided by the pension system and may have difficulties coping in retirement. In order to investigate the problem further, it is necessary to carry out an analysis and develop an action plan.

The factors listed above that hinder return have created a situation where many people of Estonian origin are wary of linking their future with Estonia. However, considering that labour shortage is worsening in Estonia, from the perspective of culture, language, and work habits it would make sense for the state to alleviate this problem by promoting the return of Estonians and people of Estonian origin.

Raising public awareness about returnees

It is important to raise awareness in society about returnees. This helps to prevent misconceptions and stereotypes³⁹ and to reinforce the perception that returnees return with valuable experience and knowledge (foreign language skills, adaptability, etc.).

For example, educational institutions emphasise the wider horizons of returned children, as well as their greater willingness to plan new activities and to encourage their classmates to take part in activities⁴⁰. In addition, sharing stories and experiences related to moving back to Estonia in the media would help raise awareness about returnees.

The planning of awareness-raising activities for returnees needs to take into account the multifaceted nature of the issue. An active campaign promoting return would be out of step with people's desire to make their own life choices. Nevertheless, the key issue is to inform the target group about the possibilities of return and the available support services, and to develop closer communication with compatriots living abroad and potential returnees.

³⁸ Satisfaction survey of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2020.

³⁹ The returnees have said that they are treated in Estonia as having failed abroad.

⁴⁰ Civitta study [‘Children of families returning to Estonia and dealing with the educational system 2017’](#).

MEASURE 3

Activities contributing to the objectives

Important supporting activities	Responsible party	Performed by	Partner	Year
Developing a national return support scheme	Ministry of Culture	Integration Foundation		2022–2025
Developing and implementing counselling services for returnees (including by region)	Ministry of Culture	Integration Foundation	Enterprise Estonia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2022–2025
Developing information channels related to returning and business and settling in Estonia	Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications	Integration Foundation, Enterprise Estonia		2022–2025
Informing returnees about employment opportunities and social guarantees	Ministry of Social Affairs	Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund, Integration Foundation	Work in Estonia by Enterprise Estonia	2022–2025
Providing language learning and adaptation services for children of returnees in schools and child care institutions	Ministry of Education and Research			2022–2025
Raising awareness and shaping attitudes in society about returning	Ministry of Culture	Integration Foundation		2022–2025
Increasing the capacity of local governments to work with the target group and provide the necessary services to them	Ministry of Culture	Integration Foundation	Local governments, Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities	2022–2025

Preparation and updating process of the action plan

The preparation of the Estonian diaspora action plan started in 2019 in close cooperation with partners.

The preparation of the action plan was initially led by the Ministry of the Interior. From March 2021, after the field of the global Estonian diaspora was transferred to the area of government of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the new head of the preparation of the action plan is the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The preparation of the action plan was advised by a steering group, which included representatives from the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Education and Research, and the Ministry of Culture in addition to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The work of the steering group was coordinated by the Undersecretary for Legal and Consular Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They work closely with the Global Estonian Cooperation Committee (ülemaailmse eestluse koostöökomisjon, ÜEKK) in the preparation and implementation of the action plan.⁴¹

Nine sectoral working groups were set up to gather input for the action plan, chaired by members of the steering group from four ministries. Representatives of ministries and their subdivisions as well as representatives of several Estonian foreign communities around the world participated in collecting input, i.e. in the work of the working groups. The sectoral working groups were divided into the following topics :

1. working group on language learning and education;
2. working group on Estonia's image, information, and communication;
3. working group on cultural exports and cooperation between cultural societies;
4. working group on cultural heritage and archives;
5. working group on economic cooperation and investment;
6. working group on consular services and citizen diplomacy;
7. working group on youth and young adults;
8. working group on providing religious services to compatriots;
9. working group on returnees.

The action plan is updated annually during the preparation of the state budget to ensure consistency with the state budget strategy and the financial resources of the state. The action plan is approved by the responsible party and submitted for information or opinion to the other parties involved in implementing the objectives of the action plan.

Everyone can give feedback on the action plan or make proposals (additional information is available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to update it. The received input will be coordinated with the members of the Cooperation Commission for Global Estonia and the action plan for the next period will be updated in accordance with the decisions.

⁴¹ Order No 158 of the Government of the Republic of 20 June 2019 [‘Establishment of the Cooperation Commission for Global Estonianness’](#).

The field of the Estonian diaspora is horizontal and the precondition for its effective functioning is good cooperation with other state agencies and the third sector, as well as a strong partnership with global Estonian communities.

The action plan will be published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

ANNEX. Definitions used in the action plan

Friends of Estonia – all people of foreign origin who are connected with Estonia in their activities and who thus support Estonia (e.g. e-residents, Estophiles, etc.).

Inclusive society – people have various opportunities to participate in decision-making and contribute to the development of society, the state supports social activity (including participation in employment, lifelong learning, and civil society), entrepreneurship, community spirit, and the desire to contribute to the development of the state (including to increase the participation potential of both the elderly and young people in social life and to improve the social activity of the non-Estonian-speaking population). The social activity of the Estonian population is the basis for joint activities and the formation of strong communities.

Adaptation – the process by which (relocated) people adapt to a new environment and the host society. Adaptation is characterised by the acquisition of knowledge and skills that help people function in the new environment in everyday life (residence, school or kindergarten places, taxes, health and social services, language learning, etc.), in the public sphere (organisation of society, laws, principles of functioning of the state, rights and obligations of persons with the citizenship of another state, residence permits and right of residence, etc.), as well as in the cultural sphere (initial understanding of the basic values, cultural practices, primary language learning, etc.).

Cultural diplomacy – the part of diplomacy through which international relations are established and developed with other countries, international organisations, and strategically important international partners through culture. Other forms of diplomacy also include public diplomacy, citizen diplomacy, business diplomacy, etc.

Internationalisation of culture – includes terms with different content, such as cultural diplomacy, cultural promotion and exchange, and cultural exports. Cultural exports – the focus of activities is on the promotion of economic and cultural relations, including the development of the creative industries and cultural tourism. The separate purpose of cultural exports is to earn income from the sale of creations and products and services in the field of culture abroad or to non-residents in Estonia.

Integration – increasing the cultural, political, and socio-economic cohesion of society. Integration is characterised by the development and acquisition of knowledge, skills, and values, through which one can contribute to the development of society through cooperation and mutual openness. As a result, differences in social participation due to the linguistic and cultural background and nationality of members of society are reduced. Integration makes it possible to form a common divided Estonian state identity, increases the sense of connection of people with the state and other members of society, supports the growth potential of the economy, and increases the stability of the state.

Promoters of citizen diplomacy – all people who contribute to the reputation, development, and success of Estonia (business ambassadors, Estonian students abroad, people working in various professional networks).

Returnee – an Estonian citizen who has settled in Estonia from a foreign country or a person of Estonian nationality who has lived abroad for a long time (at least five years) or was born abroad, and their spouse, child, and parent who settled in Estonia (including persons who have never lived in Estonia before). A person is considered a returnee for up to five years from settling in Estonia again.

Service – the result of an activity or activities aimed at a client who, within the meaning of this action plan, is a permanent resident of another nationality, a newly arrived immigrant, a returnee and a

compatriot, an Estonian, and an institution or organisation supporting their adaptation and integration.

Newly arrived immigrant – an alien who has resided legally in Estonia for less than five years and who has been granted an Estonian temporary residence permit on the basis of the Aliens Act; an alien on the basis provided for in the Act on Granting International Protection to Aliens; a citizen of the European Union and a member of their family who has acquired or been granted a temporary right of residence in Estonia on the basis provided for in the Citizen of the European Union Act.

Global Estonian community – Estonians living abroad and their descendants and friends of Estonia who promote and maintain Estonian cultural identity abroad. The idea of global Estonians was formulated by engineer and technical scientist Valter Rand at Kotkajärve Forest University in 1994, 'The majority of Estonians live in our historical homeland. However, there are thousands of places in the world where people build Estonian homes, create Estonian organisations, and live an Estonian life. As a whole, we are a global and complex society that will still be here in the future and to which our destinies will remain linked to. I call our survival and continuation in such a society global Estonia.'