



Integrated Country Strategy

Estonia

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Sharing our democratic values and a common vision for deterring and defending against global threats, Estonia remains a steadfast European partner for the United States. As a NATO ally, Estonia has exemplified what it means to be a committed member of the world's most successful defensive alliance: investing in its armed forces with over 2% of GDP, and deploying globally, even as it shores up its own borders to deter an ever belligerent Russia. As an EU member, Estonia is a leader in digital governance and advocates using Transatlantic trade as a tide to lift all boats. As a new democracy that fought hard to regain its independence and sovereignty after half a century of Soviet occupation, Estonian citizens and residents engage with us in culture, science, education and the arts to build lasting relationships that benefit both sides. Security, prosperity and friendship underpin our strategic and long-term interests in Estonia, and Embassy Tallinn smartly uses our tools and resources to ensure that our partnership pays off for the American people.

Transatlantic security remains our central Mission priority. Working with Estonian and NATO partners, we are building on the progress and cooperation of the last four years, creating interoperable forces ready for local and global challenges. Since Russia's occupation of Crimea and four years of Russian-backed violence in Eastern Ukraine, the threat from Russia to our friends and Allies has not abated. Its 2017 military exercise ZAPAD saber rattled on Estonia's border, intentionally skirted the norms of the Vienna convention, and reconfirmed that Russia does not respect the international rules-based order. Deterring a Russia that views the NATO alliance as a threat and seeks to undermine democratic principles and systems requires resolute military preparedness as well as a creative and interdisciplinary approach to hybrid threats. We will strengthen Estonian capabilities to address all security challenges.

Estonia is a provider as well as a consumer of security services, and Estonian forces have fought and died with us in Afghanistan, Iraq and around the world, deploying without caveat and at a greater number per capita than almost any other partners. We will continue to develop the interoperability of Estonian, U.S. and NATO forces to ensure that whatever challenges face us, we can confront them together. Through bilateral and multilateral exercises and planning, we will ensure that Estonia is as secure as any other country in the Alliance, and through effective deterrence, will never need to call upon Article V in the Baltics.

We will facilitate regional cooperation on border and security issues. Estonia's border is only as secure as that of its neighbors, so we will target assistance on making Estonia, Latvia and Lithuanian border cooperation seamless and effective, stopping transnational and cross border crime as well as deterring Russian aggression.

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With its longstanding focus on cyber threats, Estonia possesses unique capabilities in the digital and cyber sectors. As President Kaljulaid noted at the White House Baltic Summit in April 2018, Estonia and the United States are very different by the size of their economy. “But when we are speaking about digital economies, then this doesn’t matter anymore.” After becoming a victim of a Russian Denial Of Service (DDOS) cyber attack in 2007, Estonia learned hard lessons and has now created a cyber infrastructure for its wide-ranging digital services that can repel sophisticated attacks and be relocated if necessary. We can leverage Estonia’s innovation in digital services as well as its expertise in cyber security to develop our own resources and help other countries make the leap to more efficient and transparent e-services.

Developing our economic ties is a second Mission priority that reinforces our security relationship. True and lasting security rests not only on military power, but also on economic strength. With its open and innovative markets, Estonia shares our commitment to strengthening transatlantic trade. Expanding bilateral business and trade also gives American companies entrée into a European market that is transparent and growing. As Estonia continues to increase its US investments, we will identify and develop sectors for increased economic cooperation, including in energy and technology. We will collaborate with private sector and government officials to promote innovation. We will facilitate Estonian business and investment in the US, and we will leverage Estonia’s position in the EU to promote policies that make sense for U.S. companies and consumers.

We also seek to strengthen Western values and democratic principles across Estonia’s diverse communities. Promoting shared democratic values remains an enduring Mission priority, and we will work with our Estonian partners to enhance rule of law, democratic institutions and independent media and civil society, in Estonia and across Europe. We will support Estonia’s efforts through the Eastern Partnership and we will aim to foster social cohesion among diverse segments of Estonian society. The Mission will engage partners in government, civil society, and the media to concentrate on the root causes of Russian malign influence and far-right political grievances, and address the challenge of socially and economically integrating minority communities. Fostering greater trust in public institutions among diverse and underrepresented groups and increasing their participation in civil society will strengthen Estonian unity.

Embassy Tallinn needs an operating platform that will allow us to achieve these ambitious goals. Our aged chancery cannot support our staff or our activities, and our number one priority is the construction of a New Embassy Compound. But in addition to the physical infrastructure, we will also fight to ensure that our employees have the compensation and training to support effective and productive work.

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2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Reinforce European and Transatlantic Security

Mission Objective 1.1: Estonia strengthens its defense and security capabilities to address existing and emerging challenges, including cyber and hybrid warfare threats, as well as cyber and transnational crime.

Mission Objective 1.2: Estonia's media remains independent, resilient and able to identify and counter Russian malign influence across media platforms.

Mission Goal 2: Expand Economic Engagement, Innovation and Investment

Mission Objective 2.1: The United States and Estonia support common positions that affect the U.S.-EU trade relationship, and grow bilateral economic cooperation across various sectors, including energy, science, technology and innovation.

Mission Goal 3: Strengthen Western Values and Democratic Principles across Communities

Mission Objective 3.1: Estonia's social cohesion is tightening thanks to greater trust in public institutions among underrepresented and minority groups.

Mission Objective 3.2: Estonian and Russian speakers integrate around issues of common interest and importance.

Management Objective 1: The Mission will improve its security and safety infrastructure by working with the Office of Overseas Buildings to identify options to improve and/or relocate its Chancery.

Management Objective 2: The Mission will work to ensure we offer a compensation package that allows us to recruit and retain quality staff, and that the Embassy is properly staffed to handle an increasingly demanding workload.

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3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1: Reinforce European and Transatlantic Security

Description and Linkages: Russia's malign behavior towards its neighbors, including the use of influence campaigns and cyber attacks, presents an ongoing threat to regional and European security. A stronger and more capable Estonia strengthens overall U.S. and NATO efforts to counter Russian behavior and stabilize security in Eastern Europe. Working in concert with partners in government, civil society, and the media, Mission Estonia seeks to counter the root causes of Russian malign influence and aggression in direct support of the 2018 National Security Strategy.

Mission Objective 1.1: Estonia strengthens its defense and security capabilities to address existing and emerging challenges, including cyber and hybrid warfare threats, as well as cyber and transnational crime.

Justification: Estonia has one of the most open and transparent governments of former-Soviet nations. In order to enhance Estonian capacity, the Mission will increase linkages with U.S. institutions and formalize ongoing frameworks. The Mission will also support increased training opportunities for Estonian officials with U.S. partner institutions. European Deterrence Initiative and other military support funds will support the interoperability of U.S., Estonian, and NATO military structures, improve and close gaps in Estonian military infrastructure, and create a coherent deterrence against Russian aggression. Support for NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) multinational battlegroup, rotation of U.S. military personnel and equipment into Estonia, and joint training and exercises are key priorities.

Estonian leadership in e-governance, cyber security, and the digital economy creates fertile ground for cooperation on a wide-range of activities, including defense, law enforcement, communications, and the development of international norms in cyberspace. We will expand on existing agreements to create opportunities for cooperation with Estonian partners, the CCDCOE, and other regional and multilateral organizations as appropriate.

Mission Objective 1.2: Estonia's media remains independent, resilient and able to identify and counter Russian malign influence across media platforms.

Justification: A common misconception when looking at the Baltic region is to conflate engagement with Russian speakers with efforts to counter Russian malign influence efforts. While there is some overlap, the activities and problem sets they are intended to address are completely different. Estonia perennially ranks in the top 10 in media freedom indices,

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this is one of the only places in the region one can be a true independent Russian language journalist. Russian misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation efforts are omnipresent, but a long experience with Soviet information campaigns has resulted in a high level of awareness amongst the Estonian media and populace. In an ever-changing media landscape, our challenge is to support Estonia's media – Estonian, Russian, and English language – in their effort to inform residents of Estonia despite Kremlin-supported efforts to the contrary. Mission Estonia is focused on deploying every tool at our disposal – training, reporting tours, access to USG officials, media literacy programs – to ensure that the Estonian media and by extension the public stay ahead of the game.

Mission Goal 2: Expand Economic Engagement, Innovation and Investment

Description and Linkages: Estonia shares the U.S. commitment to promoting economic competitiveness, technology development, and free and fair global trade and is consistently ranked as one of the most open, innovative, and fiscally responsible markets in the European Union. Estonia often advocates for liberal economic policies within the EU, including to prevent unnecessary restrictions on the free movement of data, as well as other policy positions in line with U.S. objectives for U.S.-EU economic relations. We will encourage national and European regulations that support competitive access for U.S. businesses, and work with Estonia to counter unfair trade practices and modernize the rules of a fair and reciprocal economic order.

Mission Objective 2.1: The United States and Estonia support common positions that affect the U.S.-EU trade relationship, and grow bilateral economic cooperation across various sectors, including energy, science, technology and innovation.

Justification: Estonian investment into the United States outpaces expectations for the small country and has grown over 93% since 2015, to over \$207 million at the end of 2019. The growing number of successful Estonian start-ups presents an opportunity to increase this figure. We will continue to showcase the U.S. market as an attractive investment destination for Estonian firms and provide advisory services to assist local companies expand and hire U.S. workers. We will also provide tailored support to increase U.S. exports to Estonia. While Tallinn remains the center of Estonia's economic activity, there is a need to expand employment, entrepreneurship, and investment activities in second tier cities, including in majority Russian-speaking and economically depressed areas. We will seek opportunities to enhance regional economic development through public and private sector collaborations and sharing of U.S. expertise in revitalizing former industrial cities.

Mission Goal 3: Strengthen Western Values and Democratic Principles across Communities

Description and Linkages: Over the past 25 years, Estonia has made enormous strides in the development of a thriving pluralistic democracy, vibrant innovative economy, and more

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cohesive society. However, the legacy of Soviet-era migration and questions of national identity still pose a challenge to community integration for all residents of Estonia. Russian speakers, especially residents of Ida-Viru county and areas surrounding Tallinn, have much lower levels of participation in political and civic life than their ethnic-Estonian compatriots. Their corresponding lower levels of educational attainment have a direct impact on employment opportunities, creating potential opportunities for outside actors to exploit these and other “wedge issues” to advance political agendas that challenge EU and NATO unity as well as cooperation with the United States. Russian malign influence activities are pervasive, focusing on members of the Russian-speaking community and seeking to promote false narratives including targeted oppression of Russian speakers in Estonia, lack of respect for the Russian language, and that NATO/U.S. service members are an oppressive occupying force. The 2019 parliamentary election saw an increase in support for a far-right extremist party, which then joined the government as a junior coalition member. This party’s leaders continue to express intolerant and xenophobic views, particularly against underrepresented and minority groups.

Mission Objective 3.1: Estonia’s social cohesion strengthens thanks to greater trust in public institutions among underrepresented and minority groups.

Justification: Estonia continues to struggle with the integration of its Russian-speaking minority, as well as balancing the needs of the booming Tallinn region with outlying rural areas. Recent public opinion surveys show Estonian Russian speakers and ethnic Estonians in rural areas have less trust in Estonian government institutions, the EU, and NATO. Supporting Estonia’s efforts to build greater trust in public institutions among specific groups including members of the Russian-speaking community, women, refugees, LGBT persons, and ethnic Estonians in rural areas will directly strengthen on-going social cohesion efforts. Many underrepresented groups may be small in number (e.g., immigrants, refugees, LGBT), but have become focal points for wedge issue campaigns by both Russian propaganda and far-right domestic political groups that seek to destabilize Estonian society and/or gain power.

Mission Objective 3.2: Estonian and Russian speakers integrate around issues of common interest and importance.

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Justification: It is no longer enough to simply engage members of the Russian-speaking community. Younger residents of Estonia who come from a Russian-speaking background do not hold many of the biases that their parents and grandparents harbor against the Estonian state, EU, NATO, and the United States. Mutual pursuit of common interests – specifically in the fields of English language education, STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Arts Mathematics) programs, and entrepreneurship – bring these two demographics together in a positive way that contributes to their future development and that of the Estonian state.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1: The Mission will improve its security and safety infrastructure by working with the Office of Overseas Buildings to identify options to relocate its Chancery.

Justification: Our dilapidated, century-old Chancery impedes our efforts to effectively conduct diplomacy. The leased Chancery does not meet the Department's physical security standards, public accessibility requirements, and has many infrastructure defects. The building cannot be retrofitted to meet even the most basic security standards. The lack of an adequate facility negatively affects Post's ability to meet its other goals. With employees spread across four locations, the Chancery cannot accommodate current staff, much less anticipated staff already in the pipeline. Post continues to engage with OBO and the Estonian government to secure a new Chancery.

Management Objective 2: The Mission will work to ensure we offer a compensation package that allows us to recruit and retain quality staff, and that the Embassy is properly staffed to handle an increasingly demanding workload.

Justification: Post needs the right staffing to keep pace with the Mission's ambitious agenda. There are several long-standing requests for additional LE staff in key sections. For example, a need exists for Russian-speaking LE staff in the Political and Public Affairs sections to engage Estonia's Russian speakers and their role in domestic politics as well as outreach. Internally, post needs a larger ICASS platform to support the expanding USDH community and Mission activities. The addition of a LUSDH Facilities Maintenance Manager will allow post to keep pace with our growth. While post was able to negotiate a wage increase last two years, local wages continue to rise while Embassy wages fall behind and lead to poor employee retention, especially at the lower grades. The current compensation package makes it difficult to recruit talented staff, particularly at the FSN-4, 5, and 6 levels. Post continues to advocate for a fair compensation package through collaborating with neighboring Baltic countries experiencing the same trends and engaging HR/OE on the urgent need for an increase.

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