



# Integrated Country Strategy

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**Estonia**

**FOR PUBLIC RELEASE**

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## 1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Estonia remains a steadfast European partner for the United States. Our relationship is rooted in our shared democratic values and our common vision for deterring and defending against regional and global threats. Estonia exemplifies what it means to be a committed member of NATO, consistently investing in its armed forces with over 2 percent of GDP while deploying globally even as it shores up its own borders to deter Russia, which it considers an existential threat. In addition to military cooperation, our security partnership includes combating hybrid threats and transnational crime. But our agenda is broader than just security cooperation and is increasingly focused on jointly confronting global challenges and promoting the rules-based international order. Bilaterally and through multilateral institutions we together work to protect human rights, promote good governance and anti-corruption initiatives, and mitigate climate change. Closer to home, the Embassy continues to engage with Estonians of all backgrounds in culture, media, science, education, and the arts.

Transatlantic security remains our central Mission priority. Through effective defense and deterrence, we will ensure that Estonia will never need to call upon Article V to protect its sovereign territory. A stronger and more capable Estonia, able to contribute to its own defense and operate jointly with the United States and other NATO Allies around the world, strengthens European and transatlantic security, improves the credibility of the collective security architecture, and deters increasingly assertive and dangerous Russian and PRC activities. Concurrently, the United States is boosting Estonia's defense capability development through foreign assistance, a robust schedule of multinational and NATO exercises, and programs designed to improve the government's response to hybrid attacks and other crises. Already possessing both a strategic location and unique digital expertise, we will work with Estonia to strengthen our capacity to jointly counter global and regional security threats such as disinformation, hybrid aggression, and transnational crime such as cybercrime and ransomware.

Working with Estonia to confront global challenges has become an increasingly prominent Mission priority. Our relationship with Estonia is underpinned by a shared commitment to the

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rules-based international order and human rights. Our ability to partner in multilateral institutions and through development cooperation is advancing our common goals around the world, assisted by Estonia's experience in the UN Security Council in 2020-2021. Through our cooperation on issues like anti-corruption, human rights, religious freedom, women's empowerment, climate change mitigation, and rule of law, we not only improve Estonia's security, we also strengthen our ability to promote Transatlantic priorities worldwide.

The United States' economic priorities with Estonia, which has a dynamic and digitally focused market, are constantly expanding. We are working together to build back better from the global pandemic, set the rules of the road for the 21st century economy, strengthen energy security, and transition to the green economy. Estonia shares the U.S. commitment in promoting economic competitiveness, technology development, and fair market principles within the European Union. Simultaneously, we are supporting Estonia's efforts to enhance its economic resilience against non-market and coercive economic practices, as well as to strengthen its institutions capacity to resist malign actors that also may target the United States. We are helping Estonia enhance the efficacy of its anti-money laundering and counter terrorism financing regime, to ensure the safety and stability of its financial system. Above all, we will continue to work with Estonia to support global trade, investment, and technology policies that serve the interests of people on both sides of the Atlantic while protecting American interests and showcasing our innovations.

Promoting shared democratic values remains an enduring Mission priority. While Estonia has a thriving pluralistic democracy, the legacy of Soviet-era migration and questions of national identity still pose a challenge to integration and social cohesion amongst all residents of Estonia. Russian speakers have lower levels of participation in political and civic life than their ethnic-Estonian compatriots and typically rely on different sources for news and information. The rise of a far-right populist and nationalist party whose leaders continue to express intolerant and xenophobic views has created additional fissures in Estonian society. By engaging across communities and mobilizing partners in civil society, government, and the media, we aim to foster greater trust in public institutions and build connections between

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communities that will strengthen the stability of Estonia, and thus the security of NATO and the United States.

Embassy Tallinn needs an operating platform that will allow us to achieve these ambitious Mission priorities. By advancing the construction of a New Embassy Compound, we will be able to more effectively conduct diplomacy and provide for the safety and security of our employees, my top priority as Chief of Mission. In addition to improving the physical infrastructure of the mission, we will also fight to ensure that our employees have the competitive compensation, innovative training, and flexible workplace policies necessary to achieve our goals.

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## 2. Mission Strategic Framework

### **Mission Goal 1: Strengthen European and Transatlantic Security**

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Estonia strengthens its defense and security capabilities to improve the unity, resilience, and credibility of the NATO Alliance.
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Estonia counters global and regional security threats through increased collaboration with the United States and global partners on disinformation, conventional and hybrid aggression, cyber, and transnational crime.

### **Mission Goal 2: Confront Global Challenges and Advance Common Goals**

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Estonia solidifies its collaboration with the United States in multilateral organizations to promote common goals in the region and around the world.
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** Estonia supports and amplifies shared values worldwide through development assistance, anti-corruption, human rights, religious freedom, women's empowerment, climate change mitigation, and rule of law cooperation.

### **Mission Goal 3: Enhance Economic Cooperation and Resilience**

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Deepen economic cooperation with Estonia to attract investment, strengthen supply chains and trade ties, and enhance economic resilience.
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Estonia enhances its energy and environmental resilience by building on our shared objectives in climate change abatement and sustainable energy solutions.

### **Mission Goal 4: Promote Shared Values and Democratic Principles across Communities**

- **Mission Objective 4.1:** Estonia's social cohesion is improved by building greater equity and trust in democratic institutions among underrepresented and underserved communities.
- **Mission Objective 4.2:** Build coalitions, including among Estonian and Russian speakers, to facilitate inclusiveness and resiliency.

**Management Objective 1:** The Mission will improve its security and safety infrastructure by working with the Office of Overseas Buildings to advance site acquisition and planning for a New Embassy Compound.

**Management Objective 2:** The Mission will need to improve the competitiveness of its compensation package to recruit and retain quality staff as local wages and cost of living have risen dramatically in recent years.

### 3. Mission Goals and Objectives

#### **Mission Goal 1 | Strengthen European and Transatlantic Security**

**Description |** Our relationship with Estonia is underpinned by a shared commitment to democratic values, human rights, and multilateral institutions. Estonia is committed to the promotion of the international rules-based order, which it sees as essential to protect it from an aggressive Russia. As a result, NATO and EU membership form the core of Estonia's foreign policy. A stronger and more capable Estonia, able to contribute to its own defense and operate jointly with the U.S. and other NATO Allies, strengthens European and transatlantic security, improves the credibility of the collective security architecture, and deters increasingly assertive and dangerous Russian activities. Mission Goal 1 supports EUR-E&E JRS goals 1 and 4 to revitalize European alliances and partnerships and to leverage those alliances to address global and regional threats and challenges. The Mission will support defense capability development through foreign assistance, a robust schedule of multinational and NATO exercises, and programs designed to improve the government's response to hybrid attacks and other crises.

**Objective 1.1 |** Estonia strengthens its defense and security capabilities to improve the unity, resilience, and credibility of the NATO Alliance.

- **Justification |** The Mission supports the development of Estonian defense and security capabilities to demonstrate the U.S. commitment to NATO, including Article 5, ensure that Estonia has the capacity to contribute to its security and improve the credibility of NATO's deterrence posture, and meet evolving threats and challenges. Estonia continues to invest more than two percent of GDP in defense and is aided by U.S. foreign assistance programs to meet NATO capability targets, support EUCOM theater objectives, and interoperate with U.S and Allied forces. To address emerging hybrid threats and conflict below the threshold of war, the Mission engages bilaterally with the Estonian government to improve our joint capacity to respond to a crisis and deter Russian malign activities. The Mission will continue to support U.S. bilateral and



multilateral exercises, training activities, and the rotational presence of U.S. military personnel in support of U.S. foreign policy objectives.

- **Linkages** | This objective supports EUR-E&E JRS Goal 1, Objective 1.1 and EUR-E&E JRS Goal 4, Objectives 4.3 and 4.5.
- **Risks** | Failure to work with Estonia to strengthen its defense and security capabilities would weaken NATO's deterrence on the eastern flank and undermine transatlantic security.

**Objective 1.2** | Estonia counters global and regional security threats through increased collaboration with the United States and global partners on disinformation, conventional and hybrid aggression, cyber, and transnational crime.

- **Justification** | Estonia is a key partner in combatting global and regional security threats and a world leader in cybersecurity and e-governance. The Mission will enhance our collaboration with Estonian cyber institutions to better align our efforts in the military, civilian, and law enforcement cyber domains. As threats from transnational cyber-enabled crime continue to rapidly increase in severity and sophistication, Estonia has emerged as an enthusiastic partner on building regional capacity for joint law enforcement investigation and in exporting their cyber know-how to help secure the systems and improve the resilience of less developed countries. The Mission will collaborate with the Estonian government to lead regional initiatives to counter these emerging threats.
- **Linkages** | This objective supports EUR-E&E JRS Goal 1, Objective 1.1, EUR-E&E JRS Goal 2, Objective 2.3, and EUR-E&E JRS Goal 4, Objective 4.3.
- **Risks** | Failure to work with Estonia to counter global and regional security threats would increase the likelihood that disinformation, hybrid attacks, and transnational crime would undermine transatlantic security.

## **Mission Goal 2 | Confront Global Challenges and Advance Common Goals**

**Description |** The relationship between Estonia and the United States is based on shared values and a commitment to the rules-based international order. Once occupied by the Soviet Union, Estonia is now a model democracy that can share its experience rebuilding post-occupation and promote many of our shared values. Although we continue to cooperate to improve security and stability within Estonia, one of the defining features of our relationship now is our ability to partner to advance our common goals throughout the world. Estonia has prioritized work in multilateral institutions, on development cooperation, and in promoting our prized democratic values. By working together to confront global challenges we not only improve Estonia's security, but we strengthen our work to promote transatlantic priorities worldwide.

**Objective 2.1 |** Estonia solidifies its collaboration with the United States in multilateral organizations to promote common goals in the region and around the world.

- **Justification |** It is in the United States' and Estonia's interest that Estonia remains an established and respected player in the global community, both to advance these shared values and solidify Estonia's international reputation—a key aspect of its security strategy.
- **Linkages |** This objective supports EUR-E&E JRS Goal 1 and Interim National Security Strategic Guidance.
- **Risks |** Failure to work with Estonia in multilateral institutions risks lower support for U.S. priorities and marginalization of Estonia internationally.

**Objective 2.2 |** Estonia supports and amplifies shared values worldwide through development assistance, anti-corruption, human rights, religious freedom, women's empowerment, climate change mitigation, and rule of law cooperation.

- **Justification |** Cooperative promotion of shared values – particularly in the post-Soviet space – strengthen democratic values worldwide and strengthens Estonia's position in the international community.

- **Linkages** | This supports EUR-E&E JRS Goal 1 and the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance.
- **Risks** | Failure to do this represents a missed opportunity to leverage Estonian expertise to not only bolster relations but also advance U.S. goals.

### **Mission Goal 3 | Enhance Economic Cooperation and Resilience**

**Description** | We are working with Estonia to deepen our trade and investment ties, build back better from the global pandemic, set the rules of the road for the 21st century economy, strengthen energy security and the transition to the green economy, and stand united against non-market and coercive economic practices – particularly by U.S. strategic competitors. Estonia shares the U.S. commitment to promoting economic competitiveness, technology development, and fair competition based on market principles. The country 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 advocate for national and European regulations that support competitive access for U.S. businesses, and work with Estonia to support global trade, investment, and technology policies that serve the interests of people on both sides of the Atlantic while protecting American interests and promoting our innovations.

**Objective 3.1** | Deepen economic cooperation with Estonia to attract investment, strengthen supply chains and trade ties, and enhance economic resilience.

- **Justification** | Estonian investment into the United States outpaces expectations for the small country and has grown twofold since 2018, to over \$349 million at the end of 2021. 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 through the SelectUSA program and provide advisory services to assist local companies seeking to expand and hire U.S. workers. We

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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. We will enhance Estonia's economic resilience by boosting anti-money laundering capacity and expanding institutional resources to address untrusted vendors.

- **Linkages** | Increasing economic cooperation supports EUR-E&E JRS Bureau Goal 3 to promote deeper trade, investment, and energy cooperation, as well as EUR-E&E JRS Bureau Objective 4.1 to enhance global health security.
- **Risks** | Failure to advance this objective will subject the U.S. and Estonia to greater risks from non-market actors, including potential damage to the financial system.

**Objective 3.2** | Estonia enhances its energy and environmental resilience by building on our shared objectives in climate change abatement and sustainable energy solutions.

- **Justification** | Estonia has an ambitious decarbonization agenda, seeking to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 70 percent from 1990 levels by 2030 and achieving a net-zero economy by 2050. We will support Estonia's efforts to transition away from carbon-intensive energy sources and to determine which clean energy sources best fit the country's needs. We will push Estonia to raise its climate ambitions and to deliver on its climate commitments. Embassy Tallinn will promote the adoption of U.S. clean energy services and technologies, while supporting efforts to overcome barriers to clean energy integration. We will provide technical support and capacity building to support energy security, diversification, and resilience.
- **Linkages** | These efforts will support EUR-E&E JRS Bureau Objective 3.4 and EUR-E&E JRS Bureau Goal 4 to enhance energy security and address the climate crisis.
- **Risks** | Failure to advance Estonia's energy and environmental agenda could endanger the country's energy security and narrow the path toward a climate-resilient world.

## **Mission Goal 4 | Promote Shared Values and Democratic Principles across Communities**

**Description |** Over the past 25 years, Estonia has made enormous strides in the development of a thriving pluralistic democracy, vibrant innovative economy, and more 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 have much lower levels of participation in political and civic life than their ethnic-Estonian compatriots. They also face greater economic challenges and largely rely on different sources for news and information, creating potential opportunities for outside actors to exploit these and other divisive issues to advance political agendas that challenge EU and NATO unity as well as cooperation with the United States. Russian malign influence activities continue to target Estonia, focusing on members of the Russian-speaking community and promoting 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. Polling shows a consistently high level of public support for a far-right populist and nationalist party. This party's leaders continue to express intolerant and xenophobic views, particularly against underrepresented and minority groups, and regularly question the role of multilateral organizations in Estonia, including NATO and the European Union.

**Objective 4.1 |** Estonia's social cohesion is improved by building greater equity and trust in democratic institutions among underrepresented and underserved communities.

- **Justification |** Estonia continues efforts to integrate 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 democratic institutions among specific underrepresented and underserved communities, 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

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underrepresented groups may be small in number (e.g., immigrants, refugees, LGBT), but have become focal points for divisive campaigns by both Russian propaganda and far-right domestic political groups that seek to destabilize Estonian society and/or gain power.

- **Linkages** | This objective supports EUR-E&E JRS Goal 2, JSP Goals 3.1 and 3.2, and the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance goal to defend democratic values.
- **Risks** | Increased divisiveness continues, people become more susceptible to malign influence campaigns. As a result, institutions lose credibility with the public. If people do not trust in democratic institutions, then the divisions in society increase. If this cycle continues, it will negatively impact social cohesion and democratic institutions' ability to do their own work.

**Objective 4.2** | Build coalitions, including among Estonian and Russian speakers, to facilitate inclusiveness and resiliency.

- **Justification** | Polarization and division continue to be an issue in Estonia. Studies have shown that there has been much less interaction between communities within Estonia. Mutual pursuit of common interests – specifically in the fields of English language education, STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Arts Mathematics) programs, climate change, and entrepreneurship – bring these two demographics together in a positive way that contributes to their future development and that of Estonia's democratic institutions.
- **Linkages** | This objective supports EUR-E&E JRS Goal 2, and JSP Goals 1.5 and 3.1.
- **Risks** | Increased divisiveness continues, people become more susceptible to malign influence campaigns and hinders the ability of democratic institutions to advance their goals. If this trend continues youth become increasingly disaffected and unwilling to reach across demographics on these issues and institutions are unable to build coalitions.

## 4. Management Objectives

**Management Objective 1** | The Mission will improve its security and safety infrastructure by working with the Office of Overseas Buildings to advance site acquisition and planning for a New Embassy Compound.

- **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.
- **Linkages** | This ties to all objectives across the EUR-E&E JRS.
- **Risks** | Delays lead to cost overruns and sour public perception of the project. Incomplete certification requirements mean that the USG is unable to finalize acquiring the land and must start the search for a NEC anew, forcing the embassy to continue to operate for another decade in the current chancery.

**Management Objective 2** | The Mission will need to improve the competitiveness of its compensation package to recruit and retain quality staff as local wages and cost of living have risen dramatically in recent years.

- **Justification** | Post needs the right staffing to keep pace with the Mission's ambitious agenda. Internally, post needs a larger ICASS platform to support the expanding USDH community and Mission activities. The addition of a USDH Facilities Maintenance Manager will allow post to keep pace with our growth, but in the meantime, Post will hire a Locally Employed Facilities Maintenance Manager, funded through OBO. While

post was able to negotiate a wage increase two years ago, 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.

- **Linkages:** This ties to the EUR-E&E JRS Management Objective to recruit, develop, and retain a cadre of EUR officers who represent the diversity of the United States and have the set of skills necessary to advance the bureau's goals and sub-objectives 1 and 3.
- **Risks |** Funding is not approved and agencies continue to request NSDD-38s, further stretching an already understaffed ICASS support platform, leading to dissatisfaction in core services and a drop in morale and ability to recruit high quality candidates.