

# **Coronavirus pandemic in the EU – Fundamental Rights Implications**

**Country:** Estonia

**Contractor's name:** Estonian Human Rights Centre

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# 1 Measures taken by government/public authorities

## 1.1 Emergency laws/states of emergency

*Provide information on emergency laws/declarations of states of emergency, including actions taken by police to enforce them and court rulings concerning the legality of such measures.*

In **Estonia**, the emergency situation, which was declared by the government on 12 March 2020, ended on 18 May 2020. The emergency situation orders were repealed, but not all restrictions were lifted immediately, the main restrictions were re-established by government orders.<sup>1</sup>

On 13 May 2020, the Parliament (*Riigikogu*) approved a bill, which amended the Emergency Act (*Hädaolukorra seadus*) and the Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control Act (*Nakkushaiguste ennetamise ja tõrje seadus*). Previously, the Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control Act included an exhaustive list of extremely dangerous communicable diseases, for which quarantine and other restrictions could be applied. The amendments introduced the concept of a “dangerous novel communicable disease”, which would be equated with the extremely dangerous communicable diseases already listed. The amendments also gave the Health Board (*Terviseamet*) the right to quarantine, close establishments, prohibit public meetings and events and take other measures necessary to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. However, if the application of quarantine has a significant effect on the society or the economy, quarantine must be established by an order of the government.<sup>2</sup>

The considerable increase of the Health Board’s authority received criticism. The President expressed that even though the amendments are not unconstitutional, they have increased the powers of administrative authorities during future emergencies in a way that places the parliament and the government in the back seat in crisis management.<sup>3</sup> Legal experts have criticised the amendments for lack of legal clarity, as well as ineffective judicial control over the measures of the Health Board.<sup>4</sup>

Currently, most of the remaining restrictions have been re-established by orders of the government, due to the significant effect of the measures on the society and the economy. Regarding enforcement measures, the new government orders include a reference to the Law Enforcement Act § 23 (4), which sets the maximum penalty payment to € 9,600.<sup>5</sup> There are no reports of the penalty payment being applied after the end of the emergency situation.

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<sup>1</sup> Estonia, Government of the Republic (*Vabariigi valitsus*) (2020), [‘The emergency situation will come to an end at midnight of May 18, the restrictions will be eased gradually’](#), 16 May 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Estonia, Parliament (*Riigikogu*), [Meditsiiniseadme seaduse, hädaolukorra seaduse ja teiste seaduste muutmise seadus 165 SE](#), 13 May 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Postimees (2020), [‘President kuulutas välja hädaolukorra seaduse, kuid kritiseeris selle menetlust’](#), 15 May 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Postimees (2020), [‘Uno Lõhmus: milline on õiguskord pärast eriolukorra lõppu?’](#), 7 May 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Estonia, [Law Enforcement Act \(\*Korraldusseadus\*\) § 23 \(4\)](#), 23 February 2011.

## 1.2 Measures affecting the general population

### 1.2.1 Social distancing

Focus on:

- *Lifting of stay at home orders, and measures/rules for general physical distancing when in public or at home*
- *Enforcement and penalties*

In **Estonia**, after the end of the emergency situation, the previous stay at home orders were re-established by government orders. The government continued the quarantine requirement of 14 calendar days for people entering Estonia. The quarantine requirement includes the same exceptions as previously (e.g. for health care professionals, diplomats, transporters of goods or raw products), but in addition, the quarantine requirement was lifted for citizens and residents of Latvia and Lithuania, as well as for Finnish citizens or residents who come to Estonia for working, studying or compelling family reasons.<sup>6</sup>

As before the end of the emergency situation, stay at home orders are still imposed on persons diagnosed with the coronavirus, as well as persons living or permanently staying in the same residence with them. The same rules apply as previously – infected persons are prohibited from leaving their place of residence, except on the instructions of a health professional or a police officer, or in case of an emergency. The household members of the diagnosed person may leave in more cases (e.g. to obtain essentials), if they follow the general social distancing rules.<sup>7</sup>

In public places, “2+2” social distancing rule still must be followed – groups of more than two people are not allowed, and people are required to keep at least two meters of distance from each other. The restriction does not apply to families, or if it cannot be ensured due to the nature of the relevant work or activity. This rule must also be ensured in service providers’ service points, catering establishments, and shopping centres. Entertainment establishments, such as bowling alleys, spas, nightclubs, casinos must remain closed. Public events (e.g. festivals, concerts) are prohibited, but public meetings are allowed if social distancing requirements are met and the number of attendees is not higher than 10 people for indoor meetings and 100 people for outdoor meetings. Many of these restrictions are eased or lifted from 1 June 2020.<sup>8</sup>

According to the Police and Border Guard Board, most people adhered to the 2+2 rule during the emergency situation. The police issued more than 5,000 verbal warnings and more than 800 precepts for the violation of the restrictions. Misdemeanor proceedings for violating the restrictions

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<sup>6</sup> Estonia, Government of the Republic (*Vabariigi Valitsus*), [Imposition of temporary restrictions on crossing the state border and establishment of quarantine upon crossing the state border in order to prevent a new outbreak of the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 causing the COVID-19 disease](#) (*Riigipiiri ületamise ajutine piiramine ja karantiini kehtestamine riigipiiri ületamisel COVID-19 haigust põhjustava koroonaviiruse SARS-CoV-2 uue puhangu ennetamiseks*), 16 May 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Estonia, Government of the Republic (*Vabariigi Valitsus*), [Imposition of quarantine on persons diagnosed with the COVID-19 disease caused by the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 and on persons living with or permanently staying in the same place of residence as them](#) (*Karantiini kehtestamine koroonaviirusest SARS-CoV-2 põhjustatud COVID-19 haiguse diagnoosiga isikutele ja nende isikuteqa koos elavatele või samas elukohas püsivalt viibivatele isikutele*), 16 May 2020.

<sup>8</sup> Estonia, Government of the Republic (*Vabariigi Valitsus*), [Restrictions on the freedom of movement and on holding public meetings and public events as necessary for preventing the spread of the COVID-19 disease](#) (*COVID-19 haiguse leviku tõkestamiseks vajalikud liikumisvabaduse ning avalike koosolekute pidamise ja avalike ürituste korraldamise piirangud*), 16 May 2020.

were initiated in more than 200 cases and penalty payments were imposed on approximately 100 people. The police had the most difficulty with people who had consumed alcohol in a public place and refused to understand the recommendations and explanations of the police.<sup>9</sup> There are no reports of punishments being applied after the end of the emergency situation.

## 1.2.2 Education

Focus on:

- *Steps to reopen educational institutions (schools, third level educational facilities and kindergartens/day care). Please include any specific measures aimed at children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds*
- *Measures to protect students and staff as they return to educational institutions (e.g. related to physical distancing, shift patterns, health and hygiene, etc.)*

In **Estonia**, partial contact learning was resumed after 15 May 2020. This does not mean all students have to go to school, but arrangements can be made by parties concerned (student, teacher, school) to organise individual contact learning or learning in groups of up to ten students. Contact learning is proposed by the teacher, but the parent has the right to not allow the child to return to school. In this case, suitable solution must be found, for example, to continue distance learning. Schools also have the right to continue with distance learning after May 15, if it is considered necessary, reasonable, and possible.<sup>10</sup>

Contact learning is intended in particular for Year 12 students and Year 9 students who need to take the admission tests for the upper-secondary school, as well as for students who need additional support, and for whom distance learning has been complicated.<sup>11</sup>

Partial contact learning is allowed on an individual basis or in groups that have up to ten members (except for exams) and in as dispersed manner as feasible, following the 2+2 rule, if possible. When organising examinations, students taking an examination are scattered in the examination room. Shared items in the school building must be disinfected after use.<sup>12</sup>

For Year 9 students, state examinations will not take place. For Year 12 students, state examinations are not a condition for graduation for this academic year. However, students who wish to continue their studies in universities, have state exams arranged for them.<sup>13</sup> Media reported that 18% of students decided not to take the state examinations. It is still possible for them to take the exams in the autumn.<sup>14</sup>

The personal protective equipment necessary for conducting examinations (protective masks for students and employees, disinfectants in the examination room) is provided by the exam organiser

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<sup>9</sup> Õhtuleht (2020), '[HOIATUSED JA TRAHVID: kui palju oli politseil eriolukorras muret 2 + 2 piirangu rikkujatega?](#)' 19 May 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Estonia, Government of the Republic (*Vabariigi Valitsus*), [Education and distance learning](#).

<sup>11</sup> Estonia, Government of the Republic (*Vabariigi Valitsus*), [Education and distance learning](#).

<sup>12</sup> Estonia, Government of the Republic (*Vabariigi Valitsus*), [Restrictions on the freedom of movement and on holding public meetings and public events as necessary for preventing the spread of the COVID-19 disease \(COVID-19 haiguse leviku tõkestamiseks vajalikud liikumisvabaduse ning avalike koosolekute pidamise ja avalike ürituste korraldamise piirangud\)](#), 16 May 2020.

<sup>13</sup> Estonia, Government of the Republic (*Vabariigi Valitsus*), [Education and distance learning](#).

<sup>14</sup> Pealinn (2020), '[18 protsenti õpilastest on loobunud riigieksami sooritamisest](#)', 12 May 2020.

SA Innove. The school must ensure the safety and security of the examination rooms and other rooms necessary for conducting them.<sup>15</sup>

The Ministry of Education has published guidelines for “Organising indoor studies from May 15 in the COVID-19 period”<sup>16</sup> and “Arrangements for the provision of personal protective equipment and disinfection equipment for examinations and partial contact learning”<sup>17</sup>.

The same rules and recommendations apply for universities. The Ministry of Education recommends using distance learning options as much as possible until the end of the academic year, but learning may be organised in groups of up to ten people from 15 May, following the 2+2 rule, if possible.<sup>18</sup>

After 15 May 2020, kindergartens may resume their work as before the emergency situation. The Health Board is of the opinion that it is not necessary to wear a mask in kindergartens. However, if wearing a mask gives the employee a sense of security, they have the right to do it.<sup>19</sup> The kindergarten must organise the procurement of the necessary personal protective equipment. 2+2 rule does not have to be followed, since it is not reasonably guaranteed in the work of the kindergarten.<sup>20</sup>

### 1.2.3 Work

Focus on:

- *Steps for specific sectors/the general population to return to work and measures to protect employees in the workplace (physical distancing, health and hygiene, shift patterns, etc.)*
- *People in precarious work*

In **Estonia**, working was not prohibited for any sector during the emergency situation, but remote work was encouraged. As of the end of the emergency situation on 18 May, many people working from home returned to their workplace. The Ministry of Social Affairs published a reminder that this should be done safely and in cooperation with employers and employees. Precautions such as favouring remote work, enabling people to return to work in stages, keeping physical distance between workers, ventilating and cleaning rooms, and staying at home when sick continue to be important in preventing the spread of virus, according to the Ministry.<sup>21</sup>

On 21 May 2020, the government extended the compensation scheme for the employees of companies in difficulties due to the pandemic, but on renewed terms. To qualify for the compensation, the company's turnover or income must have decreased by at least 50 % compared to June of the previous year, in addition, the company must meet one of two conditions: at least

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<sup>15</sup> Estonia, Ministry of Education and Research (*Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium*), Eriolukorra lõpp ja haridusvaldkond: [Soovitused ja korduma kippuvad küsimused](#).

<sup>16</sup> Estonia, Ministry of Education and Research (*Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium*) (2020), [Õppetöö korraldamine siseruumides alates 15. maist COVID- 19 perioodil](#), 8 May 2020.

<sup>17</sup> Estonia, Ministry of Education and Research (*Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium*) (2020), [Isikukaitse- ja desinfitseerimisvahendite tagamise korraldus eksamite ja osalise kontaktõppe läbiviimiseks](#), 8 May 2020.

<sup>18</sup> Estonia, Ministry of Education and Research (*Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium*), Eriolukorra lõpp ja haridusvaldkond: [Soovitused ja korduma kippuvad küsimused](#).

<sup>19</sup> Estonia, Ministry of Education and Research (*Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium*) (2020), [Infokiri: lasteaedade ja -hoidude tegevuse korraldamisest](#), 15 May 2020.

<sup>20</sup> Estonia, Ministry of Education and Research (*Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium*), Eriolukorra lõpp ja haridusvaldkond: [Soovitused ja korduma kippuvad küsimused](#).

<sup>21</sup> Estonia, Ministry of Social Affairs (*Sotsiaalministeerium*) (2020), [‘Sotsiaalministeerium: naaseme tööle ohutult!’](#) 13 May 2020.

50 % of the company's employees do not have work, or at least 50 % of the company's employees have their wages reduced by at least 30 % or to the minimum wage. If these conditions are met, the Unemployment Insurance Fund (*Töötukassa*) reimburses 50 % of the employee's average salary, but not more than € 800 and not less than the minimum wage. The employer must pay the employee at least € 150 and guarantee their job for at least two months. The scheme was extended until the end of June 2020. The media reported that this measure has preserved the income of more than 123,000 people and jobs in almost 16,000 companies so far.<sup>22</sup>

There are no state initiatives targeted at people in precarious work.

#### 1.2.4 Access to justice

*Focus on:*

- *Strategies /steps to lift measures or restrictions previously imposed on court proceedings (e.g. resuming physical hearings)*
- *Measures to address the backlog in cases/proceedings prompted by lockdown restrictions*

In **Estonia**, the courts, which primarily used written procedures and various technical solutions during the emergency situation, have started holding more hearings in the courtroom since 18 May 2020. However, it is recommended to wear masks in the courtrooms, and the 2+2 rule must be followed. For those who do not have a mask, it is provided by the court. The judge decides on the number of people in the courtroom. All the surfaces in the courtrooms are constantly cleaned, and it must be ensured that there is enough time between two hearings to ventilate and clean the room. If a party to the proceedings becomes ill, they must report it and it will be up to the judge to decide how to proceed.<sup>23</sup>

There are no reports of backlog of cases due to the emergency situation. Estonian courts have not received many complaints related to the restrictions of the emergency situation, most people turned to the Chancellor of Justice (*Õiguskantsler*) instead.<sup>24</sup>

#### 1.2.5 Freedom of movement

*Focus on:*

- *Steps to reopen borders/lift restrictions on freedom of movement to (external borders) and within the EU (internal borders), including rules or restrictions applying to certain categories of people (citizens; 'essential workers'; cross border commuters etc). Please mention what requirements are in place for various categories of people to enter country (e.g. negative COVID-19 test result and/or obligation to self quarantine; work certificate etc).*
- *Any changes to asylum application procedures (e.g. lifting of temporary suspensions or restrictions on procedures, or mentioning whether such restrictions are rather still in place)*

In **Estonia**, the government temporarily restored border checks and restricted the entrance into the territory of Estonia on 17 March 2020. As of May 15, the governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania opened their internal borders and allowed free movement for their citizens and residents, provided that they show no symptoms of COVID-19. As of then, the border control at the Estonian-

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<sup>22</sup> ERR (2020), '[Valitsus pikendas töötasu hüvitist ka juunikuuks](#)', 21 May 2020.

<sup>23</sup> Estonian Court (*Eesti Kohtud*), '[Kohtute töö pärast eriolukorra lõppu](#)'.

<sup>24</sup> Õhtuleht (2020), '[Julia Laffranque: Koroonajuhtumitest Euroopa riikide kohtutes](#)', 2 June 2020.

Latvian border was stopped, and people arriving from Lithuania and Latvia no longer have to quarantine for 14 days.<sup>25</sup>

Finnish citizens and residents who come to Estonia to work, study or for compelling family reasons are also allowed to enter, and are not required to stay in quarantine. In addition, the rest of the exceptions still apply – for example, entry is allowed without the requirement of quarantine for transporters of goods and raw materials, people involved in the international transport of passengers, people involved in the technological work of a company operating in Estonia, health care providers, diplomats, people arriving within the framework of international military cooperation and people with special entry permits.<sup>26</sup>

At the border crossing points, the Police and Border Guard Board identifies the person by checking their documents, asks about any possible symptoms of the coronavirus, visually checks the state of health, and asks for information regarding travel itinerary. For people who arrive from any other country than Latvia, Lithuania or Finland, it is necessary to confirm with signature that they are aware of the obligation to self-isolate at home for 14 days.<sup>27</sup>

On 28 May 2020, the government approved a decision allowing people arriving from other member states of the European Union, the Schengen area, or the United Kingdom to cross the Estonian state border from 1 June 2020, provided they show no symptoms and have stayed in those countries for the last 14 days. Whether or not they are required to stay in quarantine depends on the number of COVID-19 cases in the country they arrive from.<sup>28</sup>

Asylum procedures were not suspended during the emergency situation. According to the statistics of the Police and Border Guard Board, only one new asylum application was registered in May 2020.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Estonia, Government of the Republic (*Vabariigi Valitsus*) (2020), '[The government approved a memorandum between the Baltic states on cooperation in easing the restrictions on the borders](#)', 12 May 2020.

<sup>26</sup> Estonia, Government of the Republic (*Vabariigi Valitsus*), '[Imposition of temporary restrictions on crossing the state border and establishment of quarantine upon crossing the state border in order to prevent a new outbreak of the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 causing the COVID-19 disease \(Riiqipiiri ületamise ajutine piiramine ja karantiini kehtestamine riiqipiiri ületamisel COVID-19 haigust põhjustava koroonaviiruse SARS-CoV-2 uue puhangu ennetamiseks\)](#)', 16 May 2020.

<sup>27</sup> Estonia, Government of the Republic (*Vabariigi Valitsus*), '[Crossing the Estonian border](#)'.

<sup>28</sup> Estonia, Government of the Republic (*Vabariigi Valitsus*) (2020), '[The government eased restrictions related to COVID-19](#)', 28 May 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Estonia, Police and Border Guard Board (*Politsei- ja Piirivalveamet*), Response to information request, 2 June 2020.

## 1.3 Impact of measures on particular groups

Select the three most relevant groups from the following:

- persons with disabilities,
- homeless people,
- Roma and Travellers (Note – for those countries requested to collect additional data on the impact of COVID-19 on Roma – Service request No 33 (Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Hungary, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Sweden), information submitted on Roma for Bulletin 3 should not be duplicated in this additional data collection)
- Detainees (including measures on early release or alternatives to detention)
- or another group not listed that have emerged in your country as facing particular challenges - before selection, this should be discussed with FRA.

### Persons with disabilities

In **Estonia**, in a news report on the access to information and services of persons with disabilities during the emergency situation, it was outlined as positive by the Estonian Association of the Deaf (*Eesti Kurtide Liit*) that sign language interpreter was used at press conferences every day. However, due to the use of masks, press conferences became inaccessible to people with partial hearing impairment who do not communicate in sign language. Masks have also made it more complicated for people with hearing impairment to communicate with medical professionals.<sup>30</sup>

In the same news report, the Estonian Association of the Blind (*Eesti Pimedate Liit*) confirmed that the information of the Health Board and the government reached the visually impaired persons well through radio and television broadcasts. However, the emergency situation brought new obstacles to everyday life, because many visually impaired people need daily help with close human contact. The creators of online shops for food have not made their websites accessible to visually impaired people, which meant that a large number of people had to ask for help from others to order food at home. People with reduced mobility also encountered problems with accessing the food delivery service, as the increased demand extended the waiting time for food delivery.<sup>31</sup>

According to the civil society organisation Estonian Chamber of Disabled People (*Eesti Puuetega Inimeste Koda*), another problem was the increase in care burden for families.<sup>32</sup> Even though financial support was provided for parents of children with special educational needs, there was lack of support for home schooling. There was also no solution for carers of adults with disabilities.<sup>33</sup>

The Estonian Association of Persons with Reduced Mobility (*Eesti Liikumispuudega Inimeste Liit*) pointed out that many people with disabilities need rehabilitation in order to improve or maintain

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<sup>30</sup> Parksepp, A. (2020), „Ehk inimesed nüüd mõistavad?” Eriolukord andis õppetunni puuetega inimeste vajadustest ja ühiskonna võimalustest, *Eesti Päevaleht*, 2 June 2020.

<sup>31</sup> Parksepp, A. (2020), „Ehk inimesed nüüd mõistavad?” Eriolukord andis õppetunni puuetega inimeste vajadustest ja ühiskonna võimalustest, *Eesti Päevaleht*, 2 June 2020.

<sup>32</sup> Estonian Chamber of Disabled People (*Eesti Puuetega Inimeste Koda*), Response to information request, 27 April 2020.

<sup>33</sup> Parksepp, A. (2020), „Ehk inimesed nüüd mõistavad?” Eriolukord andis õppetunni puuetega inimeste vajadustest ja ühiskonna võimalustest, *Eesti Päevaleht*, 2 June 2020.



their health, during the emergency situation they were largely deprived of it. It was possible to get the service via video or by phone, but many people need hands-on service.<sup>34</sup>

The Chancellor of Justice received no complaints on the conditions or treatment of persons with disabilities residing in special care institutions during the emergency situation.<sup>35</sup>

### **Homeless people**

In **Estonia**, an outbreak of COVID-19 has been reported in one homeless shelter. The homeless shelter on Alasi street in Tallinn was quarantined on 4 April 2020, when one of its clients tested positive for the coronavirus. The quarantine was extended in mid-April, after another 17 clients tested positive. Most of the people who tested positive did not show any symptoms of the virus. The shelter provided the quarantined clients with three meals a day, as well as options for entertainment, such as books, games, and movies.<sup>36</sup> On 8 May 2020, the shelter was opened again.<sup>37</sup>

According to the head of the Tallinn Social Welfare and Health Department, there are very few homeless people in Tallinn who do not stay in shelters, so by organising health checks at the shelters it is possible to limit the risk of the coronavirus spreading among the homeless.<sup>38</sup>

There are no reports on increase of demand for accommodation, or complaints regarding staffing, equipment or readiness for quarantine at the homeless shelters.

### **Detainees**

In **Estonia**, no prisoners have been diagnosed with the coronavirus.<sup>39</sup> As of 29 April 2020, prisons started a transition period to ease the strict restrictions imposed during the emergency situation. As one of the first changes, the prisoners were allowed to walk in fresh air again<sup>40</sup>, the prohibition of which was previously criticised by the Chancellor of Justice.<sup>41</sup> On 11 May 2020, normal regime for accepting and forwarding parcels and letters was resumed.<sup>42</sup> As of 18 May 2020, short visits are allowed in a room separated by a glass partition.<sup>43</sup> From 1 June 2020, Estonian prisons switched to normal regime, as it was before the emergency.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Parksepp, A. (2020), „[Ehk inimesed nüüd mõistavad?](#)” Eriolukord andis õppetunni puuetega inimeste vajadustest ja ühiskonna võimalustest, *Eesti Päevaleht*, 2 June 2020.

<sup>35</sup> Estonia, Chancellor of Justice (*Õiguskantsler*), Response to information request, 5 June 2020.

<sup>36</sup> ERR (2020), [Tallinnas on koroonaviirus tuvastatud ühes kodutute öömajas](#), 23 April 2020.

<sup>37</sup> ERR (2020), [Tallinna Alasi tänava kodutute öömaja on pärast karantiini uuesti avatud](#), 8 May 2020.

<sup>38</sup> ERR (2020), [Tallinnas on koroonaviirus tuvastatud ühes kodutute öömajas](#), 23 April 2020.

<sup>39</sup> Estonia, Ministry of Justice (*Justiitsministeerium*), Estonian Prison Service (*Vanglateenistus*), [Tavatöole üleminek](#).

<sup>40</sup> Lõuna-Eesti Postimees (2020), [Vangidele võib taas pakke ja kirju saata](#), 11 May 2020.

<sup>41</sup> Estonia, Chancellor of Justice (*Õiguskantsler*), [COVID-19 haigust põhjustava viiruse leviku tõkestamise meetmed](#), 6 April 2020.

<sup>42</sup> Lõuna-Eesti Postimees (2020), [Vangidele võib taas pakke ja kirju saata](#), 11 May 2020.

<sup>43</sup> Estonia, Government of the Republic (*Vabariigi Valitsus*), [Eriolukorra leevendusmeetmete rakendamine vanglates](#).

<sup>44</sup> Estonia, Ministry of Justice (*Justiitsministeerium*), Estonian Prison Service (*Vanglateenistus*), [Tavatöole üleminek](#).

## 2 Impact on fundamental rights of older people

*Please provide information under each title / sub-title; and indicate n/a when no information available.*

### 2.1 Data/statistics

*Where available, data should be disaggregated by age groups and sex.*

#### 2.1.1 Share of persons 60+ in the total number of persons in the community infected, recovered and died in relation to COVID-19.

- Infected by COVID-19

427 persons in the age group 60+ have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the community (outside care institutions).<sup>45</sup>

The total number of infections as of 31 May 2020 was 1870.<sup>46</sup>

- Recovered from COVID-19

269 of the infected persons in the age group 60+ in the community have recovered from COVID-19.<sup>47</sup>

- Died in relation to COVID-19

37 persons in the age group 60+ in the community have died in relation to COVID-19.<sup>48</sup>

The total number of deaths in relation to COVID-19 as of 31 May 2020 was 68.<sup>49</sup>

#### 2.1.2 Share of persons 60+ in the total number of persons in institutional settings infected, recovered and died in relation to COVID-19.

- Infected by COVID-19

216 persons in the age group 60+ have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in care institutions.<sup>50</sup>

- Recovered from COVID-19

188 persons in the age group 60+ have recovered from COVID-19 in care institutions.<sup>51</sup>

- Died in relation to COVID-19

28 persons have died of COVID-19 in care institutions, all of them in the age group 60+.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Estonia, Health Board (*Terviseamet*), Response to information request, 8 May 2020.

<sup>46</sup> Estonian COVID-19 statistics: [Koroonakaart](#).

<sup>47</sup> Estonia, Health Board (*Terviseamet*), Response to information request, 8 May 2020.

<sup>48</sup> Estonia, Health Board (*Terviseamet*), Response to information request, 8 May 2020.

<sup>49</sup> Estonian COVID-19 statistics: [Koroonakaart](#).

<sup>50</sup> Estonia, Health Board (*Terviseamet*), Response to information request, 8 May 2020.

<sup>51</sup> Estonia, Health Board (*Terviseamet*), Response to information request, 8 May 2020.

<sup>52</sup> Estonia, Health Board (*Terviseamet*), Response to information request, 8 May 2020.

### 2.1.3 Number and type of institutions affected

In **Estonia**, there are a total of 248 general and special care institutions, including care homes for older people as well as other types of social welfare institutions.<sup>53</sup> Testing for COVID-19 was performed in 179 care institutions.<sup>54</sup> According to the test results, COVID-19 has spread in a total of 26 general and special care institutions since the beginning of the emergency situation. Of these, in ten institutions only clients have fallen ill, in ten both clients and employees, and in six only employees.<sup>55</sup> Most of the affected institutions have been care homes for older people.<sup>56</sup>

### 2.1.4 Do official statistics on mortality rates from COVID-19 include deaths of older persons in care homes? Has there been any critique of data collection with respect to care homes?

In **Estonia**, official statistics on mortality rates from COVID-19 include deaths of older persons in care homes. There has been no critique reported regarding data collection.

### 2.1.5 Independent studies published on the situation of older persons with respect to the impact of and responses to COVID-19

*Please reference up to three studies and provide brief information on their focus.*

N/A

## 2.2 COVID-19 measures targeting older people

*Please indicate the age group/s concerned; e.g. 60+, 65+, 70+ etc.*

*Please consult and refer in particular to measures related to existing or planned national exit strategies (policies/measures).*

*Please report on developments for the reference period 1 May – 31 May (inclusive) and on any changes/revisions of measures reported in the 1st and 2nd bulletin regarding older people.*

### 2.2.1 National guidelines/protocols in response to COVID-19 addressing older people

- in residential care homes (including protective equipment, visits etc.)

In **Estonia**, the Health Board issued guidelines to care institutions on the topic of COVID-19, most recently updated on 22 May 2020. The seven-page document includes the obligation for the institutions to create their own code of conduct on how to proceed in case of COVID-19 suspicion, as well as the obligation to wear protective face masks. The document also includes guidelines on dividing the institutions into sections for isolation, and other relevant instructions.<sup>57</sup> The Health

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<sup>53</sup> Estonia, Health Board (*Terviseamet*) (2020), '[Haiglaid ja hoolekandeesutusi võib külastada vaid erandkorras](#)', 18 May 2020.

<sup>54</sup> Estonia, Health Board (*Terviseamet*), Response to information request, 8 May 2020.

<sup>55</sup> Estonia, Health Board (*Terviseamet*) (2020), '[Haiglaid ja hoolekandeesutusi võib külastada vaid erandkorras](#)', 18 May 2020.

<sup>56</sup> Estonia, Health Board (*Terviseamet*), Response to information request, 8 May 2020.

<sup>57</sup> Estonia, Health Board (*Terviseamet*) (2020), '[COVID-19 isolatsioon hoolekodudes](#)', 22 May 2020.

Board also created an illustrative scheme on what steps to take if there is a suspicion that a care institution client is infected with COVID-19.<sup>58</sup>

- in the community in general

In **Estonia**, on 16 March 2020, the Estonian Society of Family Doctors (*Eesti Perearstide Selts*) issued guidelines to the elderly and people close to them on how to protect themselves from the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidelines include recommendations on hygiene, preparations for coping with the emergency situation, and what to do in case of getting ill.<sup>59</sup>

### **2.2.2 National guidelines/protocols on patient triage that apply age as the main and decisive criterion**

In **Estonia**, the necessity of testing is decided by the family doctor who refers the patient to be tested. The family doctors were issued with guidelines from the Health Board, but the final decision is up to the doctor's medical decision, taking into consideration the patient's symptoms, general health condition and any additional diseases. Testing priority is given to older people and the chronically ill, regardless of their age.<sup>60</sup>

### **2.2.3 Targeted testing of residents and staff in residential care homes**

- Is this laid down in a targeted policy/measure or done on an ad-hoc basis when a case has been detected?

In **Estonia**, the Ministry of Social Affairs announced on 29 March 2020 that large-scale testing will be organised in care institutions, starting from care homes in the municipalities with the highest infection rates.<sup>61</sup>

- Data/statistics on testing & frequency of testing – institutions, residents, staff

In **Estonia**, 12,477 tests have been performed in 179 care institutions, of which 247 were positive for COVID-19 (including residents and staff).<sup>62</sup>

### **2.2.4 Restrictions/bans on visits to residential care settings, and any (conditional) lifting of these restrictions**

*Please report on the conditions applied.*

In **Estonia**, visits to care institutions were banned as part of the first measures of the emergency situation on 13 March 2020.<sup>63</sup> After the end of the emergency situation on 18 May 2020, the Health Board established prohibition on visits to hospitals and care institutions until June 1, with the exception of visiting a dying person and providing mental health care. The owner of the institution must ensure that visitation guidelines have been drafted in cooperation with the Health Board and

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<sup>58</sup> Estonia, Health Board (*Terviseamet*) (2020), [Hooldekodudes isoleerimise skeem](#).

<sup>59</sup> ERR (2020), ['Perearstid avaldasid nõuanded eakatele ja nende lähedastele eriolukorras tegutsemiseks'](#), 16 March 2020.

<sup>60</sup> Estonia, Government of the Republic (*Vabariigi Valitsus*), [Testing for the virus](#).

<sup>61</sup> ERR (2020), [Riik alustab hooldekodudes laustestimist](#), 29 March 2020.

<sup>62</sup> Estonia, Health Board (*Terviseamet*), Response to information request, 8 May 2020.

<sup>63</sup> Estonia, [Application of measures of emergency situation \(Eriolukorra meetmete rakendamine\)](#), 13 March 2020.

that these guidelines are being followed. Among other things, it must be ensured that the visitor, the person being visited, and the personnel are using personal protective equipment. If possible, the meeting is arranged outdoors or in special rooms. The visitor must present a health declaration beforehand, which is filled out on the premises.<sup>64</sup>

### **2.2.5 Restrictive measures for older people living in the community**

*Please report on any restrictions for older people after gradual lifting of confinement measures (e.g. use of public services, work, and participation in voluntary and social activities).*

In **Estonia**, no specific restrictive measures were imposed on older people living in the community, the same rules apply as for the rest of the population.<sup>65</sup>

### **2.2.6 Access to healthcare for older people for conditions unrelated to COVID-19**

*Please report on measures targeted at older people living in the community and in institutional care settings (e.g. home-based visits, mobile health care, other hospital treatment).*

In **Estonia**, on 21 April 2020, the Health Board lifted the restrictions imposed on the provision of general and specialised health care during the emergency situation.<sup>66</sup> The Health Board also issued guidelines on organising the reception of patients, it is recommended to prefer remote appointments if possible.<sup>67</sup> Remote appointments can be organised via phone, videocall or online messaging solutions.<sup>68</sup>

### **2.2.7 Support measures and promising practices targeting older people, including access to goods and services online and offline, social/psychological support, and use of digital tools and technology**

*Please also report on any targeted measures for people with dementia.*

In **Estonia**, civil society organisations NGO Jututaja and Peaasi launched an initiative “Call an elderly relative!” to provide emotional support and company to the elderly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since not everyone has a close relative that could call, the organisations also encourage older people to make themselves known if they need someone to talk to by contacting NGO Jututaja by phone or email.<sup>69</sup>

There are no relevant state measures targeting older people specifically, but everyone in need can contact the crisis hotline 1247 of the Emergency Response Centre (*Häirekeskus*), which offers psychological first aid. Assistance is provided in cooperation with the specialists of the 116 006 victim support crisis hotline of the Social Insurance Board (*Sotsiaalkindlustusamet*).<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Estonia, Government of the Republic (*Vabariigi Valitsus*), [Gradual exit from the coronavirus crisis](#).

<sup>65</sup> Estonia, Government of the Republic (*Vabariigi Valitsus*), [Hädaolukorra aegsed õigusaktid](#).

<sup>66</sup> Estonia, Health Board (*Terviseamet*) (2020), [Plaanilise ravi piirangute lõpetamine](#), 21 April 2020.

<sup>67</sup> Estonia, Health Board (*Terviseamet*) (2020), [Miinimumnõuded tervishoiuteenuste osutajatele \(TTO\) plaanilise töö taastamiseks COVID-19 epideemia järgsetes tingimustes](#), 1 June 2020.

<sup>68</sup> Estonia, Health Insurance Fund (*Haigekassa*), [Kaugvastuvõttud](#).

<sup>69</sup> Peaasi (2020), [‘Algatus “Helista eakale lähedasele!” kutsub üles tuge ja seltsi vajavaid eakaid endast teada andma](#)’, 2 April 2020.

<sup>70</sup> Estonia, Social Insurance Board (*Sotsiaalkindlustusamet*) (2020), [‘Crisis hotline 1247 now offers psychological first aid](#)’, 27 March 2020.

Older people can also benefit from the option of ordering necessary medication online through e-pharmacies, for which there was an increased demand during the emergency situation.<sup>71</sup>

### **2.2.8 Consultation of older people's organisations and/or other civil society organisations in the design, implementation and review of COVID-19-related measures**

In **Estonia**, the design, implementation and review of COVID-19-related measures concerning older people were consulted with the relevant state institutions, such as the Social Insurance Board and the Health Board, but no civil society organisations.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Tervisegeenius (2020), '[E-apteekidest ravimite tellimine võib kauem aega võtta, arvestada tuleb kuni nelja päevaga](#)', 17 March 2020.

<sup>72</sup> Estonia, Health Board (*Terviseamet*), Response to information request, 8 May 2020.