



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA  
MINISTRY OF CULTURE

# Roma integration policy and coordination in Estonia

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# Some facts about the country

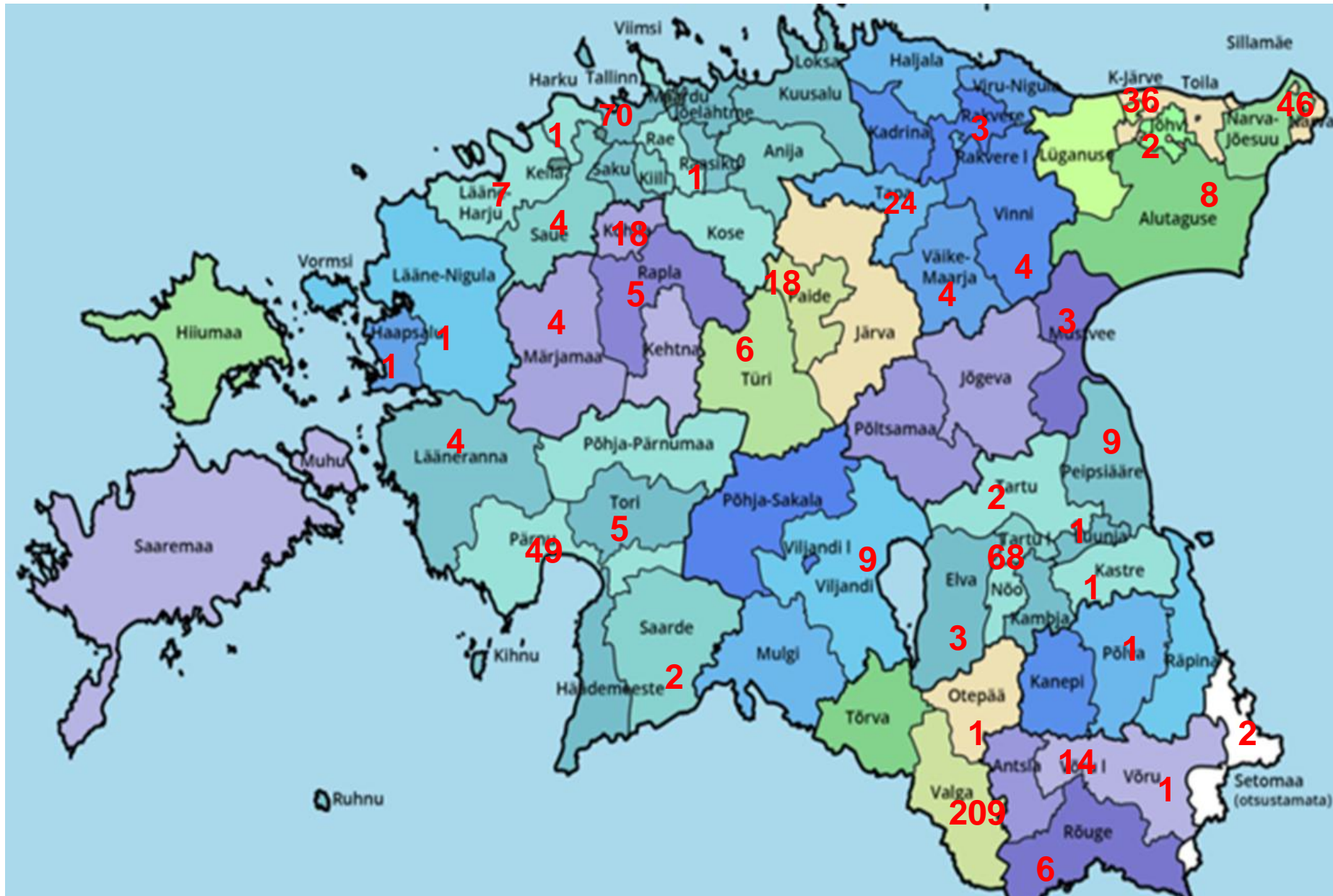
- Estonia has a **population** of 1 319 133 (as of 1 January 2018).
- The Estonian **language** is a Finno-Ugric language.
- Since the 16th century, Estonia has been a predominantly **protestant** (Lutheran) country.
- **Largest ethnic groups:** Estonians (69%), Russians (25%), Ukrainians (2%), Belarussians (1%) and Finns (0,6%).

# Roma in Estonia

- The number of Roma living in Estonia as of 1 January 2018 was **649**, constituting **0,05%** of Estonian population (Estonian Population Register).
- 59% are born in Estonia, 28% in Latvia, 10% in Russian Federation and 3% in other countries.
- 40% are Estonian citizens, 37% Latvian citizens, 14% Russian citizens, 8% people with undetermined citizenship and 1% citizens of other countries.

- Dialects spoken: **Lotfitka** and **Xaladytka**.
- By self-determination there are three Roma groups: **Laloritka Roma** (Estonian Roma), **Lotfitka Roma** (Latvian Roma) and **Xaladytka Roma**(Russian Roma).
- Mother languages: 66% Romani language, 16% Russian, 10% Estonian, 1,5% Latvian, 1% other languages.

## The number of Roma living in Estonian municipalities (as of 1.03.2018)



## Level of education (Population Register, 2018)

- Without elementary education 6%
- Elementary education 24%
- Basic education 31%
- Upper-secondary education 11%
- Vocational education 2%
- Higher education 1%
- Unknown 25%

## Pupils with Romani as mother language in the school system (Estonian Education Information System, 2018)

- Grades 1.-3. 22
- Grades 4.-6. 23
- Grades 7.-9. 11

**In total 55**

Pupils learning according to the simplified curriculum 5

Pupils learning in special schools 2

# Socioeconomic status

• Housewives/on parental leave	155
• Minors not studying nor working	18
• Other non-working persons	13
• Retired persons	36
• Unemployed	163
• In employment	72
• Disabled	13
• Students (all levels)	45
• Status unknown	134

# Current situation

- Small, but diversified and fractured Roma community, dispersed throughout Estonia;
- Weak cultural self-confidence and restricted openness to integration;
- Low level of education and employment;
- Limited operational capability and low membership of Roma organisations;
- Municipal government's low interest and involvement in integration incl. Roma integration;
- Limited experiences of schools in supporting the education of Roma children.

## Integration policy „The Strategy of Integration and Social Cohesion 2020“:

- ✓ Supporting the awareness of a common information space and of cultural diversity;
- ✓ Supporting everyday contacts, communication and involvement in society;
- ✓ Supporting the native language and culture of ethnic minorities;
- ✓ Creating opportunities for less integrated Estonian permanent residents with a foreign background for increasing their social activity and supporting their integration;
- ✓ Promotion of equal treatment on labour market.
- ✓ Supporting the integration on legal and political basis.
- ✓ Adaption programmes for new arrivals.

# Priorities of the Strategy

- Activities for more tolerant society, establishing open attitudes that encourage integration;
- Supporting less integrated permanent residents;
- Activities promoting adaption targeted at new arrivals.

# Roma Integration Council

- A co-ordinating advisory body for Roma integration.
- Founded in December 2015 by the Minister of Culture; meets at least twice a year.
- Tasks:
  - ✓ Encouraging dialogue between integration stakeholders;
  - ✓ To promote mutual learning and co-operation between the stakeholders;
  - ✓ To discuss and provide solutions to problems related to Roma integration.

# Roma Platform

- 1) Identifying the stakeholders of Roma integration, preparation of creation of local Roma platforms within municipalities where the number of Roma is larger;
- 2) Increasing the visibility of the Roma Integration Council which is active as an advisory coordinating council under the Ministry of Culture and improving the Council's cooperation with municipal governments, municipal institutions and other Roma integration stakeholders;
- 3) Increasing the Roma community capability to be an active stakeholder in integration activities and decision making processes as well as protecting the interests of one's own community. Supporting the strength of organisations and furthering the creation of new organisations through training;
- 4) Preparations for utilising Roma mediators: Roma youths who want to become advocates or mediators for the community, through increasing recognising and supporting Roma culture, civil society, project management skills, teamwork and communication skills.
- 6) Collecting information for planning future integration activities.

# Platform activities



- 2 studies;
- 4 trainings for 23 young Roma each;
- 3 individual trainings for 3 young Roma activists;
- Creation of Roma Platform website with original materials and translations;
- Training seminar for pedagogues;
- Meetings in municipalities.

# Challenges

- Activities for implementation of the mainstream integration strategy hardly reach the isolated Roma people; no targeted measures nor indicators in the Implementation Plan; weak co-ordination among integration stakeholders;
- Lack of consistent and sustainable financing of Roma integration activities; very limited chances to get financing from external donors as the number of Roma people is very small compared to other countries;
- Lack of competent partners among the small, but fragmented Roma community; No pro-Roma NGOs.
- School-dropout: low pre-school attendance, no Roma mediators employed. Low employment with consequences;
- Low involvement of municipalities in integration process as active partners.



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# Thank you for your attention.

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