



Toute l'Europe
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Your Ref: 11.03.2026

Our Ref: 26.03.2026 No 2-6/26-1862-2

Response to the inquiry

Dear Ms. Deseille,

Thank you for your inquiry.

We are pleased to provide you the information of interest.

In Estonia, a person is criminally liable if he/she is at least 14 years old at the time the act is committed. This does not depend on the severity or nature of the act.

In Estonia, the age of criminal responsibility has been 14 since September 1, 2002, when the new Penal Code came into effect. Prior to that, the age of criminal responsibility was 15. For certain types of crimes, a person was only criminally liable if he/she committed the act between the ages of 13 and 15.

In Estonia, juvenile prisoners are held at Viru Prison, which has a separate wing for this purpose. The law allows the prosecutor's office to request that a court order the detention of a juvenile suspect in a secure juvenile facility rather than in prison, to avoid placing juveniles in prison.

In Estonia, the number of juvenile offenses has declined in recent years, even though the number of minors aged 14 to 17 in society has increased. The most sensitive issue in society is serious crimes committed by minors and the nature of these offenses. The main question is what drives minors to commit extremely violent crimes, whether punishment for minors is too lenient, and other similar issues.

Concerning your last question, to provide a meaningful and accurate response, we would kindly require additional information regarding the specific aspect of criminal liability harmonization being referred to. The question of whether Estonia supports European harmonization cannot be addressed in general terms, as Estonia's position may vary depending on the subject matter and scope of the proposed harmonization. Accordingly, Estonia's view would depend on the concrete initiative or legal area under consideration, including the objectives, legal basis, and practical implications of the harmonization in question. We would therefore appreciate further clarification of the specific proposal or domain of criminal liability to which the question relates.

Yours sincerely,

Laidi Surva
Deputy Secretary General (Criminal Policy)