

1. NATIONAL ASYLUM AND MIGRATION MANAGEMENT CONTEXT

Estonia has established an adequate migration management system to manage the inflow of migrants and asylum seekers under the existing legal framework, which will be amended in line with the reformed EU legal framework.

Until the beginning of 2022, the number of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection in Estonia, remained relatively low. A sharp increase in applications of international protection occurred during 2015 - 2016 as a result of the occupation of the Crimean Peninsula of Ukraine by Russian Federation and particularly since 2022, after the Russian Federation's war of aggression in Ukraine. As a result, instead of the usual 100 applications per year, nearly 3 000 applications were submitted in 2022 and nearly 4 000 applications in 2023. International protection was granted to nearly 4 000 people in 2023, instead of the usual 50 persons. In 2024, 1 328 foreigners submitted applications, and international protection was granted to 1 369 persons. Top 5 nationalities applying for international protection in Estonia in 2024 were Ukrainian, Russian, Belarussian, Indian and Georgian. A total of 434 new applications for international protection have been submitted in the first four months of 2025, with Ukrainian citizens accounting for 92% of the total number of applicants. These are mainly individuals who were residing in Estonia already before the war and who therefore are not in the scope of temporary protection.

Additionally, 41 871 Ukrainian war refugees applied for temporary protection in 2022, 8 782 in 2023 and 6 096 in 2024. This sharp increase created a huge administrative burden resulting in urgent upscaling of proceeding and reception capacities of the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board and the Social Insurance Board. During the first four months of 2025 a total of 1 811 new applications for temporary protection have been registered, resulting in a total of 33 961 persons having a valid temporary residence permit based on temporary protection. That makes Estonia one of top countries hosting the most Ukrainian war refugees *per capita*. The number of new applications for temporary protection ranges from 85 to 140 applications per week. We expect this trend to continue in the coming months.

Considering the geographical location of Estonia and its shared border with the Russian Federation and proximity to Belarus, it is essential to take into consideration the possible threat of instrumentalized migration as we saw in Finland in 2023 and continue to see at the Polish, Lithuanian and Latvian borders with Belarus already since 2021. Today, Estonia has not yet been a subject of instrumentalized migration. Irregular border crossings by third country nationals are mostly detected at the external border on average 1-3 cases per week. In 2022, there were 42 cases of irregular border crossings, whereas in 2023 it was 134 and 173 in 2024. During the first four months of 2025 a total of 31 cases have been detected and we expect the same weekly trend to continue.

To mitigate risks and prepare for addressing adequately to the instrumentalization of migrants, Estonian Police and Border Guard Board has prepared a risk analysis on mass immigration, according to which the threat of mass immigration to Estonia is currently assessed as low, however it must be taken into account that Russia has the prerequisites to create migration pressure on Estonia's eastern border. The analysis assesses the possible direct and indirect impacts of such a migratory attack on Estonia and outlines measures to mitigate the risks.

Although the pressure of illegal migration on the EU's external borders decreased by nearly 40% in 2024 compared to the previous year, EU Member States remain an attractive destination for migrants travelling illegally. According to information gathered by the Blueprint network, irregular border crossing attempts at EU border with Belarus have again increased during the first four months of 2025. Russia and Belarus will most likely maintain their attractiveness among migrants thanks to the simplified visa regime and direct flight connections. Therefore, it is probable that the pressure of irregular migration on the EU's external borders will remain, but it is unlikely to increase significantly in 2025-2026 (+/-10-15%).

Estonia also supports activities in the external dimension of migration with the objective to alleviate the pressure of illegal migration from third countries towards the EU. Preventive activities in the countries of origin and transit of migration are important, including strengthening the border management capacity of partner countries. We are of the opinion that activities must be continued to strengthen the fight against smuggling and to increase the capacity of EU agencies to deal with migration challenges. In order to enhance cooperation on readmission with third countries, it is important to use the opportunities of the EU's development cooperation, trade and visa policy in a targeted manner. From Estonia's perspective, it is important to create, above all, mutually beneficial relations with countries of origin and transit that can encompass the entire region. We also support harnessing the full potential of Team Europe approach as possibilities for bilateral cooperation in third countries are often very limited for smaller Member States.

2. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND KEY MEASURES IN THE FIELD OF ASYLUM AND MIGRATION MANAGEMENT

2.1 Effective management of the asylum and migration system aiming at the reduction of migratory pressure on the basis of the comprehensive approach

As a joint decision of the interagency working group led by the Ministry of the Interior, Estonia will not create and adopt a separate migration strategy document, because there are already strategic documents of the respective fields, most importantly the comprehensive strategy of internal security, each of which follow the specific workflow of adoption, amendment and implementation. Therefore, it would pose unnecessarily big administrative burden to make a change of that scale impacting the current well-functioning workflows of many ministries. Instead, the current documents shall be amended to integrate necessary new elements into existing strategies and the respective components shall be referenced to meet the goal of holistic approach. The following paragraphs emphasises, in which strategic policy-making documents described elements are covered.

2.1.1 External dimension elements:

Considering your national context and geographic location and identified current and future challenges, as well as identified needs, describe how the strategic policy objectives will address the relevant migratory routes, in full compliance with Union and international law and in full respect for fundamental rights. Describe which of the following key elements and measures are

relevant for achieving your current and future strategic objectives in this area. In addition, include any other measures that you consider the most relevant for achieving the strategic objectives.

- How to best promote and build tailor-made and mutually beneficial partnerships with third countries of origin and transit and how to foster cooperation with relevant third countries at bilateral, regional and multilateral level, including on effective return, tailor-made and mutually beneficial partnerships with third countries of origin and transit and how to foster cooperation with relevant third countries at bilateral, regional and multilateral level

Creating and maintaining strategic partnerships with third countries of origin and transit and ways of fostering cooperation with relevant third countries at bilateral, regional, and multilateral level are emphasised in Estonian Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Strategy 2024-2030¹ (general principles and focuses p. 1-14; focus countries p. 15-18) and in Operational Programme for the Development Cooperation Strategy 2024-2026² (thematic priorities p. 12-13).

Strategic objective regarding creation of partnerships to provide fast and effective return is worded in Internal Security Strategy 2020-2030³ (p. 36) as well as in the dedicated programme, including objectives regarding cooperation with foreign embassies, obtaining travel document for a foreigner, or increased use of RCMS31 (p. 23).

- How to promote legal migration and legal pathways for third country nationals in need of international protection as well as for those otherwise admitted to legally reside in the Member State, including, where relevant, participation in EU Talent Partnership² and in the Union Resettlement Framework³.

To promote legal migration and legal pathways for third country nationals, including those in need of international protection, Development plan of the Estonian External Policy 2030⁴ emphasized objective of encouraging and introducing value-added learning and work migration to Estonia and opportunities to apply for a long-term visa (D-Visa) (p. 29). For a similar cause, activities in Internal Security Strategy 2020-2030 include, first, ensuring the flexibility of the rules on immigration and legal stay of skilled workers and top professionals creating high added value and a person-centred approach for both short- and longer-term arrival and stay; second, increasing awareness of Estonia as an attractive country of destination for skilled labor and the conditions and opportunities for arrival and residence in Estonia in cooperation with partners (p. 36). Alongside working towards strategic objectives, Internal Security Strategy 2020-2030 programme of 2025-2028 has set an increase of the quality of the professional migration

¹ [Estonian Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Strategy 2024-2030](#)

² [Operational Programme for the Development Cooperation Strategy 2024-2026](#)

³ [Internal Security Strategy 2020-2030](#)

⁴ [Development plan of the Estonian External Policy 2030](#)

counselling system to raise awareness and support migrants before and during procedures, as an objective (p. 14).

Talent Partnership, *per se*, is not described in strategic documents. Nevertheless, it is practiced⁵.

- Other measures that could facilitate your strategic objectives in this area, such as: measures to support third countries that host large numbers of migrants and refugees, measures to support third countries' operational capacities in migration, asylum and border management in full respect of human rights, measures to address root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement and to prevent and reduce irregular migration to the territories of the Member States, while ensuring the right to apply for international protection, measures to prevent and combat migrant smuggling and measures countering trafficking in human beings, while reducing the vulnerabilities caused by them, and to protect the rights of smuggled and trafficked human beings. Consider measures to address the root causes and drivers of irregular migration and forced displacement.

How the root causes of drivers of irregular migration and forced displacement are addressed and support of third countries organised is covered in Estonian Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Strategy 2024-2030⁶ emphasising the national objectives. Objectives regarding development of legal migration and asylum system, are described in Internal Security Strategy 2020-2030.

Strategic objectives that prevent and reduce irregular migration, while ensuring the right to apply for international protection are covered in Internal Security Strategy 2020-2030 (p. 33).

Strategic objectives to prevent and combat migrant smuggling and trafficking of human beings is described in Internal Security Strategy 2020-2030 (p. 32-33) which include, first, aim to prevent and combat migrant smuggling and measures countering trafficking in human beings, while reducing the vulnerabilities caused by them, and to protect the rights of smuggled and trafficked human beings aim to increase awareness among professionals involved in the identification of victims of trafficking and the processing of crimes of trafficking; second, aim to implement the confiscation of criminal property in the proceedings of crimes of trafficking. Objectives related to preventing, protecting and increasing the current protection measures the rights of victims of human trafficking is emphasized in Agreement of Preventing Violence 2021-2025⁷ (p. 27).

2.1.2 Internal dimension elements:

Considering your national context and geographic location and identified current and future challenges, as well as identified needs, describe the strategic policy objectives aiming notably to reduce incentives for and to prevent absconding and unauthorized movements of third

⁵ [How a Baltic initiative is tapping Africa for ICT professionals amid EU skills shortage | ESTDEV](#)

⁶ [Estonian Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Strategy 2024-2030](#)

⁷ [Agreement of Preventing Violence 2021-2025](#)

country nationals or stateless persons between Member States. Describe which of the following key elements and measures are relevant for achieving your current and future strategic objectives in this area. In addition, include any other measures that you consider the most relevant for achieving the strategic objectives.

- How to best ensure the correct and expeditious application of the rules on the determination of the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection, and where necessary, carry out the transfer to the Member State responsible. Furthermore, indicate measures aiming at an effective implementation of the take-back-and take-charge procedures, measures limiting abuses of the national asylum system, including through absconding and unauthorised movements, and how the results of the monitoring carried out in accordance with Article 14 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2303 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁴ have been or will be taken into account, as relevant.

As described in Internal Security Strategy programme 2026-2029⁸ in action plan related to implementation of the pact, following objectives are set for period 2024-2029 to best ensure the correct and expeditious application of the regulations on the determination of the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection, and where necessary, carry out the transfer to the Member State responsible:

- Changes related to the procedural processes have been analyzed and implemented, including restructured existing and created necessary new units (including a Dublin unit) and automatic operating processes.
- Domestic procedures have been established and supplemented in accordance with EUAA guidelines

To fulfil effective implementation of the take-back- and take-charge procedures, measures limiting abuse of the national asylum system, including through absconding and unauthorized movements, strategic objectives are described in Internal Security Strategy 2020-2030 (p. 36) and Internal Security Strategy programme 2026-2029, Implementation of migration surveillance.

Similarly strategic objectives linked with measures to fight exploitation, reduce illegal employment, correct application of sanctions, and measures to effectively prevent the exploitation of migrants in the labour market are covered in Internal Security Strategy 2020-2030 (p. 32 and 36) and specific development tasks in Internal Security Strategy programme 2025-2028⁹ (objective 1.1 p. 13, objective 1.5 p 15, and objective 2.1 p. 20).

Measures to ensure the correct application of sanctions are emphasised in Internal Security Strategy programme 2025-2028 (objective 1.1 p. 13, objective 1.5 p 15, and objective 2.1 p. 20).

⁸ The programme includes developmental objectives in more detail. The programmes are confirmed on national level by December 2025.

⁹ [Internal Security Strategy programme 2025-2028](#)

- Regarding the effective management of return, describe your strategic policy approach ensuring effective management of the return of illegally staying third country nationals, including their effective and dignified return, in accordance with Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.

As emphasised in Internal Security Strategy and above, the objective of a balanced migration policy is to make the return of migrants staying in Estonia without a legal basis faster and more efficient as it currently is (p. 36). Strategic objectives to further develop current return policy, is described in the Strategy's programme Citizenship, Migration and Identity Management Policy 2025-2028¹⁰ (p. 21).

- Other measures that could facilitate your strategic objectives in the area of return management, such as: establishing cooperation between relevant actors and authorities, strategic planning of capacities, using relevant Frontex tools or developing reintegration support measures. Moreover, consider how the results of the monitoring undertaken by the EUAA and Frontex and the evaluation carried out in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2022/9227 are being or will be taken into account, as relevant.

The most important development tasks in the implementation of the return policy respecting fundamental rights are provided for in the Internal Security Strategy programme "Citizenship, Migration and Identity Management Policy 2025-2028 in support of Estonia's development". They include development on the following systems and databases:

- The ILLEGAAL database corresponds to the RECAMAS model and is interfaced with the Frontex information system IRMA 2.0.
- The SKEELD database has been moved to a new platform.
- Possibilities have been created in the return procedure to confirm receipt of the document by electronic notation.
- The need has been mapped, and the capacity has been established to transmit reliable and updated data for the production of return analyses.
- ILLEGAAL and SKEELD databases are interfaced with EES and ETIAS systems.

With regard to better linking the field of return to border, asylum, migration management and penal systems, the following development tasks have been established:

- Action and referral processes have been agreed to better link border, migration, offence and return procedures, ensuring that the return decision is made immediately after the migrant's right to stay expires and that vulnerable persons are protected.

In order to support the voluntary and sustainable return of foreigners and to ensure the following development tasks have been agreed upon for the following fundamental rights of those to be returned:

¹⁰ [Lisa 4. Programm Eesti arengut toetav kodakondsus- rände- ja identiteedihalduspoliitika 2025-2028.pdf](#)

- A professional advisory system covering all stages of the migration process has been set up to raise awareness of the consequences of the illegal stay and measures to support the return;
- Information exchange and intra-state cooperation have been improved for the need-based provision of return and reintegration services (e.g. JRS, VARRE programme) in a way that prevents duplication and misuse of grants.
- Information exchange and cooperation have been improved for deportation observations and for the resolution of the discovered problems.

In order to strengthen cooperation with the main countries of origin and transit of irregular migration, the following development tasks are provided:

- Forms of cooperation with the competent authorities of third countries have been established, including with foreign representations to identify the person and his nationality, obtain, withdraw a travel document for the migrant.
- In cooperation with third countries, the use of the RCMS for faster processing of readmission requests and requests has been increased.

2.1.3 Measures to provide effective support to other Member States:

Describe your strategic approach to ensure the Member State capacity to provide effective support to other Member States in the form of solidarity contributions and under the Permanent EU Migration Support Toolbox referred to in Article 6(3) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1351 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

Solidarity contribution decision making process is described in current and will be amended in the **Act on Granting International Protection to Foreign Nationals¹¹** (hereinafter AGIPA). **The new draft of the AGIPA** stipulates that the Government shall decide on Estonia's participation in solidarity mechanism and in resettlement mechanism, coordinating it with the European Union Affairs Committee of the Riigikogu. The decision on the contribution in the solidarity mechanism must determine at least the number of persons to be accepted, and the year, , the amount of the monetary contribution and the alternative measures. Consequently, a government decision is expected to set out the details of the country's participation in a solidarity mechanism annually or possibly for several years.

2.2 Effective management of the EU external borders

2.2.1 Effective management of the EU external borders and access to international protection:

- How to achieve a high level of complementarity between this strategy and the national strategy for European Integrated Border Management as set out in Article 3 of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁹ . If

¹¹ [Act on Granting International Protection to Foreign Nationals](#)

relevant, consider measures ensuring full respect for the obligations laid down in international and Union law with regard to persons rescued at sea.

To improve current practices, Internal Security Strategy Programme on Quick and Expert Assistance 2026-2029 aims to fulfil two objectives:

- The capacity to carry out flight - and sea rescue work during the winter navigation period is raised. The willingness of responders to respond to large-scale marine rescue events is strengthened
 - How to ensure full implementation of the common tenacious policy at national level, including how to best organise the appropriate migration and security checks ahead of timely issuance of tenacious and how to prevent abuse of tenacious free schemes.
- How to ensure full implementation of the common visa policy at national level, including how to best organise the appropriate migration and security checks ahead of timely issuance of visa and how to prevent abuse of visa free schemes.

Internal Security Strategy Programme; Citizenship, Migration and Identity Management Policy 2025-2028 states as a priority challenge in the field of visa policy is changing the legal environment for legal migration and return. As a problem, there has been an increased risk to internal security in recent years due to illegal entry of foreigners into Estonia, including the instrumentalisation of migration, misuse of visas and residence permits and illegal employment here.

To solve the problem of misuse of legal pathways, three developmental tasks are set as follows:

- The legal environment of legal migration and the changes made are further analysed in order to address the bottlenecks in the regulation, to support the arrival of talent and investments in Estonia, while also paying attention to preventing the misuse of migrants ?? and mitigating security risks, and ensuring effective procedures.
 - Databases supporting migration procedures (such as the residence permit and work permit register, the short-term employment database, the visa register, the migration supervision database) are being developed and implemented to reduce administrative burdens on applicants and processors, increase user-friendliness and automation, and enhance public surveillance and risk prevention.
 - The legal environment in the area of return is changed and the relevant EU and national information systems are developed to support the faster return of persons who do not meet the requirements of staying or living in the territories of a Member State, including posing a risk to public order or national security.
- How the main results of the monitoring undertaken by the EUAA and Frontex, and the evaluation carried out in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2022/922 of the European Parliament and of the Council as well as of the monitoring carried out in accordance with Article 10 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1356 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹⁰ are being or will be taken into account, as relevant.

It is stated in the Internal Security Strategy Programme; Citizenship, Migration and Identity Management Policy 2026-2029, that the procedure for international protection is legitimate,

effective and of high quality at any given time. At each stage of the procedure, procedural guarantees and fundamental rights of the applicants are guaranteed, including taking account of the special needs and the specific procedural guarantees of applicants. In addition, with new draft of the AGIPA, the amendment of the Law of the Chancellor of Justice¹² will be updated so that the Chancellor of Justice is appointed as the independent monitoring mechanism in the context of screening and border procedures.

2.2.2 Effective access to international protection at the EU external borders:

- How to best ensure timely and effective access to a fair and efficient procedure for international protection at the EU external borders, transit zones and the territorial seas.

Estonia does not implement border procedure currently. Creation of border procedure and capacity corresponding to the adequate capacity of the border procedure have been established as a strategic objective in the Internal Security Strategy programmes section of the Citizenship, Migration and Identity Management Policy 2026-2029.

- In relation to the need for a continuous and effective implementation of the border procedure set out in Regulations (EU) 2024/1348¹¹ and (EU) 2024/1349 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹² in the future, describe any relevant measures that will ensure, among other, its correct application at the borders and will preserve the right of asylum. Moreover, consider and describe how to best streamline the asylum and return procedure in case of a rejection of the application for international protection, including at the stage of the judicial review.

Objectives regarding effective implementation of the border procedure are emphasised in the Internal Security Strategy Programme; Citizenship, Migration and Identity Management Policy 2026-2029 as follows:

- The asylum border procedure and the capacity corresponding to the adequate capacity of the border procedure have been established.
- Officials working in the area of asylum are trained and competent. The national training capacity to implement the reform, a permanent and sustainable competence-based training system and a training plan on the basis of which people involved in the implementation of the reform are trained on time.

2.3 A fair asylum and integration system

2.3.1 Ensuring timely and effective access to fair and efficient asylum procedures in the territory of a Member State

¹² [Law of the Chancellor of Justice](#)

- Your strategic approach to ensure, at administrative and judicial level (courts and tribunals), in full respect of the principle of judicial independence, high quality and consistency of the administrative and judicial decision-making processes in timely manner in the Member State, including through measures aiming at convergence of asylum decisions and reducing the risk of abuse of the national asylum system.

Estonia has one judicial system, where access to foreigners, including applicants of international protection, is provided for on equal basis with Estonian nationals with limited means. Ensuring high quality and consistency of the administrative and judicial decision-making processes in timely manner is an objective in Court Developmental Plan 2024-2030¹³. Named strategic document states as follows 'The administration of justice takes place within a reasonable time; there is a balance between the quality and speed of the administration of justice.'(p. 3). Objective to aim at convergence of asylum decisions and reducing the risk of abuse of the national asylum system is covered on the same page with courts' aim to provide human-centered and technologically progressive court that guarantees fair, effective and transparent justice (p. 3).

- Measures aiming at strategic planning, ensuring necessary capacities at administrative and judicial level (courts and tribunals), in full respect of the principle of judicial independence, to correctly comply with the obligations laid down in Regulation (EU) 2024/1348 and (EU) 2024/1347 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹³, regarding access to procedure and review of applications for international protection.

According to the Code of Administrative Court Procedure¹⁴ art 126 (3), international protection cases are considered by the court as a matter of priority. According to the new draft of the AGIPA, the deadlines are set not to be exceeded the 12 weeks in case of the border procedure and 6 months in case of the regular substantive procedure.

2.3.2 Procedural safeguards and fundamental rights:

- How the strategic policy approach, accompanied by relevant key measures ensuring respect for fundamental rights and safeguards, including those enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, including procedural safeguards and conditions of detention, is ensured, and monitored with due regard to national, Union and international case law. Take into account specific needs of unaccompanied minors and vulnerable applicants.

Protection of fundamental rights and safeguards during detention is emphasised in the Internal Security Strategy (p. 35) throughout procedures, including reception in the section of Citizenship, Migration and Identity Management Policy 2026-2029.

2.3.3 A robust reception system:

¹³ [Court Developmental Plan 2024-2030](#)

¹⁴ [Code of Administrative Court Procedure](#)

- Your strategic approach to best ensure that the reception system has the capacity to provide access for applicants to adequate reception conditions in accordance with Directive (EU) 2024/1346 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹⁴.

Development of the reception system for applicants and beneficiaries of international protection is an objective stated in the Internal Security Strategy. Developmental tasks and subtasks regarding reception system are stated in Internal Security Strategy programme; Citizenship, Migration and Identity Management Policy 2026-2029. They are as follows:

- The conditions of admission are guaranteed at any given time in a high quality and with regard to the fundamental rights and the special reception needs
 - IT developments: The case management module for the accommodation centre in STAR has been developed
 - Reception specialists are trained and competent, training plan and e-learning modules have been established.
 - Translation solutions in the social field have been enhanced.
 - Those receiving international protection have been supported by a need-based support service.
 - The infrastructure and accessibility of the accommodation centre has been improved.

Legislative changes will be covered in the new draft of AGIPA.

- Other measures that could facilitate your strategic objectives in this area, such as: measures to ensure a sustainable, resilient and adequate reception system, measures to ensure the monitoring of adequate reception conditions (and basic needs, if applicable), measures to reduce the risk of abuses of the reception system, measures to cater for specific needs of unaccompanied minors and vulnerable persons; add measures related to integration, in accordance with Directive (EU) 2024/1346 of the European Parliament and of the Council

Covered above

2.3.4 Creating conditions for a successful and early integration:

- Your strategic approach to ensure successful integration of beneficiaries of international protection and beneficiaries of other national protection schemes, including the respect of the rights under Regulation (EU) 2024/1347 (education, including language courses, employment, healthcare, housing, social and social assistance).

In terms of education, all children in accordance with the Elementary and Upper Secondary Schools Act, including children of foreign nationals residing in Estonia, are compulsory for schooling. Underage recipients of protection are guaranteed to receive general education under the same conditions as Estonian citizens. In addition to the democratic values of the country,

Article 38 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child¹⁵, the Temporary Protection Directive¹⁶ and the right of every child to study in Estonia is granted by the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia¹⁷, according to which everyone has the right to education. The abundance of learning opportunities and the availability of education are described as a target setting in the strategy "Development Plan for Education 2021-2035".

As emphasised in Coherent Estonia Development Plan 2030¹⁸, national objective is to create a situation where there are trustful, friendly and close direct contacts between people with different native languages (p. 20) Integration of applicants¹⁹ and beneficiaries of international protection is organised through Settle In Estonia programme²⁰ and mandatory language courses which developmental tasks are described in integration, including settling programme's project 2025-2028²¹ (p. 15).

Beneficiaries of international protection have access to other types of activities (employment, healthcare, housing, social and social assistance) on the same bases as other residents.

2.4 Preparedness and contingency planning

- How to best ensure that the obligations in Regulation (EU) 2024/1359, Regulation (EU) 2019/1896, Directive (EU) 2024/1346 and Regulation (EU) 2021/2303 of the European Parliament and of the Council are taken into account and reflected when implementing the national strategy.

Covered above.

- How to achieve, on a strategic level, and based on continuous analysis of emerging challenges and possible future risks, the relevance of your contingency plans on asylum and migration, while also ensuring the obligations laid down in Directive (EU) 2024/1346 of the European Parliament and of the Council are met. Moreover, consider how to ensure that the national strategy is consistent with and strategically complements other relevant national contingency and preparedness strategies, such as in the area of security.

PBGB has created crises plan that puts together work principles, processes, and agreements, as well as resources. The "crisis plan" is flexible and adaptable to various crises situations, which is why it is possible to respond accordingly to the changing situation using the same plan. There are situational plans for dealing with a specific type of crises.

Crises caused by the mass influx of third country nationals has been updated based on the EUAA requirements and template to national contingency and preparedness plan. The

¹⁵ [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

¹⁶ [Temporary Protection Directive](#)

¹⁷ [the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia](#)

¹⁸ [Coherent Estonia Development Plan 2030](#)

¹⁹ Programme will be updated and need to provide mandatory adoption and language courses to applicants of international protection added by the end of 2025.

²⁰ [Settle In Estonia programme](#)

²¹ [integration, including settling programme's project 2025-2028](#)

situational plan covers general principles, cooperation with partner organizations and their task. In addition, it is an obligation to assess the timeliness of the emergency plan and, if necessary, to amend the plan every 2 years. The renewal of the plan is part of the systemic activities for which the PBGB and the State Chancellery are responsible.

- How to make use of reports issued by the Commission within the framework of the Migration Preparedness and Crisis Blueprint¹⁶, so that they support your contingency planning needs.

PBGB prepares immigration prognosis and possible scenarios based on the foreseen needs. Blueprint reports are one of the inputs for preparing prognosis and respective most likely scenarios. PBGB has based its prognosis of immigration from Ukraine based on Blueprint scenarios.

- How to ensure that your national system is equipped with necessary measures to prepare for, respond to and resolve exceptional situations of mass arrivals of third country nationals or stateless persons in your Member State by land, air or sea, including of persons that have been disembarked, where relevant. Including through measures to protect the fundamental rights of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection and of other forms of protection.

PBGB threat analyses includes a possible scenario that covers resolving the situations of exceptional mass arrivals of third country nationals. PBGB in cooperation with State Chancellery and other relevant authorities update the plan and organise trainings to create readiness to address the situation.

- How to ensure that your national system is equipped with necessary measures providing for overall readiness to prepare for, respond to and resolve situations of instrumentalisation in the field of migration and asylum, where a third country or a hostile non-state actor encourages or facilitates the movement of third-country nationals or stateless persons to the external borders or to your Member State, with the aim of destabilising the Union or a Member State, and where such actions are liable to put at risk essential functions of a Member State, including measures to protect the fundamental rights of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection and other forms of protection.

PBGB has a mass immigration emergency plan based on both countering migration attacks and mass immigration. The development of border security and migration capabilities is carried out in the Internal Security Development Plan. In addition, Estonia has a National Defence Plan (State Defence Action Plan, Home Office Sub-Plan) which has also addressed mass immigration. Based on possible scenarios for the development of the necessary capabilities, the Government of the Republic has confirmed a broad national defence investment plan, which is also referred to in the National Budget Strategy 2025-2028. Relevant activities are listed in other strategic documents such as: PBGB Mass Immigration Emergency Plan (not publicly available), State Defence Action Plan (not publicly available), State Defence Action Plan Home

Office Sub-Plan (not publicly available), Broad Investment Plan (not publicly available), and [National Budget Strategy 2025-2028](#) (p. 192)

- How to ensure that your national system is equipped with necessary measures to prepare for, respond to and resolve situations of force majeure, including measures to protect the rights of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection and other forms of protection.

The mass immigration emergency plan provides sufficient flexibility to prepare, respond and resolve situations of force majeure. In addition, interministerial and other level working groups discuss state of play to prevent, prepare and resolve situations of force majeure. For instance, a high level leading coordination group of chancellors from appropriate ministries comes together to discuss Ukraine-related topics, including make decisions on situation-specific basis.

2.5 Delivering on the integrated approach - measures to implement the principle of integrated policymaking

- How to best set up institutional arrangements for migration and asylum governance based on the comprehensive approach to migration and asylum management at the national level, including coordination structures between various government departments (relevant ministries and agencies) to deliver on the internal and external components of the comprehensive approach to migration and asylum and their mutual coherence.

In addition to daily communication and cooperation among organisations, coordination for preparing to implement the reformed EU common asylum and migration management system is led by the Ministry of the Interior and operates on several levels.

The working group was established in June 2024 by decree of the Minister of the Interior. This working group brings together all key stakeholders involved in asylum and migration management in Estonia. Regular members are the Ministry of the Interior, the Government Office, the Police and Border Guard Board, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and Research, the State Shared Service Centre, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Social Insurance Board. Other relevant stakeholders are involved as necessary.

The working group meets monthly in a hybrid form from. Members may form subgroups to address specific issues in detail as necessary. A total of at least 10 subgroups have operated across various authorities, focusing on a variety of procedure-related, reception-related and legal issues.

To raise public awareness and engage interested participants, the Ministry of the Interior, in collaboration with the EMN Estonian Contact Point, organised a public event on the reform and its impact. The event, opened by the European Commission, featured speakers from nine relevant organisations and drew 120 in-person attendees. It was also broadcast live by Estonian daily newspaper *Postimees*, reaching approximately 600 participants online.

- How to ensure effective arrangements aiming at efficient coordination and cooperation between the government and the judiciary (courts and tribunals), in full respect of the principle of judicial independence, and between different State levels (national, regional, local), as appropriate and in accordance with national law.

Necessary arrangements (and discussions about them) are conducted in cooperation with partners following national law and best principles of policy-making, taking into account already created systems of change making.

- How other stakeholders, including international and non-governmental organisations, economic and social partners and migration organisations, can be meaningfully involved.

Coordination is led by the Ministry of the Interior and encompasses two networks: the refugee policy coordination body and the network of social partners. In recent years, these two forums have been held jointly as needed and at least twice annually, even without significant developments.²² In addition, there are regular monthly meetings with UNHCR and meetings with IOM on needs basis

- How the overall cooperation with other Member States is ensured (including exchange of information required under Union law) and how the consistency with the actions by other Member States and Union institutions is ensured.

PBGB passes on regular migration and asylum information to EU agencies, MOI and PBGB participate in a meetings of working groups and networks and comply with the rules under Union law.

2.6 Ensuring sufficient capacity and capability for an effective implementation of the national strategy

- How the availability of the necessary human, material and financial resources and infrastructure to effectively implement this strategy is best ensured, considering that the strategy will be implemented over a period of five years.

In recent years, Estonia's purchasing power has decreased due to several global and Regional crises. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted economy. Shortly after Russia's full-scale invasion and war aggression against Ukraine led to further instability in the region, causing energy prices to rise and contributing the overall economic uncertainty. These events, combined with global supply chain issues, triggered high inflation, which reduced the real value of wages and increased the cost of living. As a result, the government had to increase public spending to

²² Social partners include UNHCR, IOM, Red Cross, Human Rights Centre, Human Rights Institute, Refugee Aid, Red Cross, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, International House, Mondo, Johannes Mihkelson Centre, Estonian Auxiliary Police Association, Estonian Council of Churches, Estonian World, Tartu People's University, Integration Foundation, European Migration Network Estonian Contact Point, State Chancellery, National Audit Office, Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities, AS Welfare Services, Tallinn Migration Centre, Unemployment Insurance Fund, Ministry of Culture, Social Insurance Board (accessed 11.03.2025).

support the economy and citizens. This has led to the accumulation of public debt and budget cuts in period between 2025-2028, which is a new challenge for a country that has traditionally maintained low levels of debt.

Majority of the changes are covered from currently available AMIF 2021-2027 or Special Allocation (AMIF and BMVI), and national budget. Meeting the necessary objectives is observed in according to (reporting and monitoring) rules of using foreign funding, national budget and updating national strategic documents.

- How modern digital data management and communication tools are used for an effective asylum and migration management system at national level, including the large-scale IT systems and tools of the Union, managed by eu-LISA.

As stated in the Internal Security Strategy Programme; Citizenship, Migration and Identity Management Policy 2026-2029, the developmental aim regarding IT solutions are as follows:

- the Eurodac system has been implemented, inclusive of EURODAC interface with databases of RAKS and, ILLEGAAL
- courts system e-file solution interface with RAKS and ILLEGAAL,
- technical module for screening has been created.
- new ICT solutions including the use of integrated machine translation are introduced and integrated to international protection procedures.

- How the available operational support tools set up at Union level are or could be used for an effective asylum and migration management system, such as those provided by the EUAA and Frontex or the Permanent EU Migration Support Toolbox.

Internal Security Strategy Programme; Citizenship, Migration and Identity Management Policy 2026-2029 includes a development aim to create a capacity to accept and use the assistance of UNHCR, EUAA, other international and EU institutions and Member States in Estonia has been ensured.

- How to best ensure that available financial support by the Union can efficiently contribute to support the implementation of the strategy, while complementing national funds, and to ensure effective functioning of the asylum and migration management system.

In putting together SA application, there has been an on-going dialogue between Ministry of the Interior, interministerial working group and European Commission to find the best ways how to ensure efficient use of support provided by the Union and national funds. In more detail, additional needs assessment in the authorities subordinated to the Ministry of the Interior was carried out for the compilation of the national budget strategy. Application must be approved by the government after which the application is to the EC. Approval process takes approximately two months as it requires several steps (i. draft government's decision, programme amendment and detailed explanatory note uploaded into government's draft IT-

system for other ministries' approval; ii. documents sent to the Government Office, iii. Government meeting appointed).