Annex IV: Country Information

Each of the reports is based on a combination of data derived from the following sources:

- Interviews with 2 respondents—HRAW leaders or informed observers of NGO landscape from a particular country. In total 21 interviews were held during February, March, April 2010 with respondents from 10 countries. Each interview was recorded and transcribed without attribution;
- Research of literature, publications and reports on the NGO sustainability, situation in the area of human rights, accountability and watchdog as well as about funding of NGOs;
- Web-search of sites of HRAWs and donor organizations relevant to the subject of the study.

At the beginning of each report we provide a summary of key human rights, accountability and watchdog issues that are relevant for a given country. These are based on various reports of international and domestic organizations that monitor the situation. The list of issues provides a context for the need of activities performed by the HRAWs. The list of selected HRAWs with their short description comes next and provides the reader with a sense of who are the major HRAW NGO actors in a given country. Lists are not exhaustive, but to some degree representative.

The next section in a country report looks at the sustainability situation of HRAWs and presents the key challenges and issues that these organizations face. The information in this section is based mostly on the analysis of conducted interviews.

The final section deals with the funding sources, both existing and potential ones and analyzes them from the perspective of HRAWs.

Given a very heterogeneous and to some extent incomplete information, it was not possible to formulate conclusions for each country, however for some countries we offer summary of findings and conclusions, especially when the available data allowed us to do so.

Each report also includes the list of resources and publications used, a list of HRAW web addresses and list of respondents without identification.

3.1 Estonia

1. Human Rights, Accountability and Watchdog Context

According to various reports, such as Amnesty International, U.S. State Department, Human Rights Watch, European Agency for Fundamental Rights, and some others, there is no significant or systematic abuse of human rights in Estonia. However, there are some problems in certain areas.

One issue on which there are conflicting views of the international community is the issue of ethnic Russians, their linguistic discrimination on labor market and in education. Other issues include:

“...allegations that police used excessive force during the arrest of suspects; authorities investigated and brought charges against alleged offenders. Some reports state that conditions in detention centers generally remained poor. Lengthy pretrial detention continued to be a problem. Domestic violence, inequality of women’s salaries, child abuse, and trafficking of women were also reported... The government continued to support an NGO-operated hotline that provided
information on trafficking risks to persons interested in working abroad. The hotline received more than 600 calls during the year”1.

The corruption remains an important issue. The Eurobarometre survey published in November 2009 said that 82% of respondents in Estonia considered corruption a major problem in Estonia2.

A number of domestic and international human rights groups generally operate without government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. Government officials were usually cooperative and responsive to their views.

2. Key Human Rights, Accountability and Watchdog NGOs

There are several NGOs in Estonia whose mission is protection of human rights or promotion of government accountability that address issues stated above:

- Estonian Human Rights Center (EHRC) is an independent public interest foundation dedicated to advancement of protection of human rights in Estonia and abroad. During 2007-2009 the centre operated within the structure of International University Audentes (after merger Tallinn University of Technology). It raises awareness about human rights, advocates for and monitors and researches the situation in this field. It also provides scholarships and stipends for human rights activities. EHRC is a member of the EU Fundamental Rights Platform, which is a network of NGO cooperation under the auspices of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency. EHRC is supported by the Estonian Ministry of Culture, the Open Estonia Foundation and Tallinn Law School at Tallinn University of Technology3.

- Estonian Institute for Human Rights (EIHR) initiated by Estonian President Lennart Meri – was founded on the 10th of December, Human Rights Day, in 1992. The main functions of EIHR are monitoring the situation in the field of individual and collective human rights, collecting and disseminating domestic and international information on human rights, providing information and expertise on human rights protection and implementation and providing legal aid in the field of human rights. The EIHR addresses these issues through publishing reports, teaching materials, compilations of lectures, translations and publications of human rights documents and international instruments. The EIHR also promotes educational programmes for young lawyers and law students through grants received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Netherlands, and Swedish International Development Agency4.

- The Legal Information Center for Human Rights (LICHR) was established in 1994 with the support of three Danish non-governmental organizations within the Democratisation programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (DANIDA) and with the assistance of the Presidential Round Table on National Minorities, the Representative Assembly of Non-Citizens of Estonia and Tallinn City Chancellery. The Center provides access to justice and protection of human rights through legal aid, it analyses human rights and national minorities’ rights situation, monitors Estonian legislation and makes efforts to contribute to the integration process and inter-ethnic dialogue in society. It also provides legal training in the sphere of human rights5.

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2 http://www.transparency.ee/cm/en/node/140
3 www.humanrights.ee
4 www.eihr.ee
5 http://www.lichr.ee/main/discrimination
- Jaan Tonnison Institute. The mission on the Jaan Tõnisson Institute is to promote forming and strengthening civil society in Estonia. Its core activities are in civic, multicultural and global education. It organises trainings and workshops for Estonian and Russian students, and many other activities. The Institute cooperates with a number of domestic and international partners from NGO, academia and government.

- Transparency International-Estonia is a non-profit association registered as a separate organization at the beginning of 2007. TI-E was set up to highlight appearance of corruption in the public and private sector. The organization aims at building a coalition of anti-corruption forces in Estonia. From 2000 to 2007, TI-Estonia functioned as a unit of the Jaan Tõnisson Institute. At the beginning of 2007, it was registered as an independent NGO. TI Estonia’s main fields of activity are analysing the risks of corruption, pointing out and bringing attention of authorities to the problematic fields, developing proposals of legislative amendments and strengthening cooperation between the institutions and private persons concerned with the fight against corruption. Its key donor is the Open Estonia Foundation.

- The Estonian Patient Advocacy Association (EPAA) is a non-profit NGO established in 1994, that’s primary aim is to advocate for the human and civil rights of health and social care service users. Between 1994 – 2008 EPAA advocated for the rights of 19,550 clients, carried out education work about patients’ rights for 20,500 different stakeholders, litigating test-cases about human rights, raising a number of systemic issues on different levels and influencing decision making in Estonian health and social care system to respect service users' choices.

In the view of local observers, many advocacy and watchdog activities are also performed by other NGOs along with their other core activities.

3. Situation of the HRAW NGOs and their Sustainability

In general, the situation with NGO sustainability in Estonia shows signs of improvement. However, the situation of HRAW NGOs given their profile and focus is more difficult.

There are donor support activities that focus on organizational development for NGOs, which HRAWs also benefit from. For example, funding and development programs mentioned below that were organised by local foundations or national NGO development programs target not just project work, but internal development of NGOs.

While this practice of focusing on internal development and capacity building can be commended, the list of funding sources mentioning HRAW NGOs on their websites suggests that much of their work is project work and the composition of their funds is primarily international (public and to some extent private) and secondly, domestic funding from public sources. There is very little or almost no domestic private funding, with few exceptions – where the funding comes from the corporate sources, typically internationally owned.

There are also examples of organizations that draw their activity and energy from membership constituency, such as the Patients Advocacy NGO that follow specific interest. In other cases, more traditional human rights NGOs ally with the academic sector and international and European human rights

6 www.jti.ee
7 www.transparency.ee
8 www.epey.ee
networks that allows them to pursue their mission\textsuperscript{10}. This seems to be a practical and realistic strategy (in fact similar to HRAWs in other countries from the CEE) for the future as far their sustainability is concerned. It also preserves their mission. However, it is relatively ad hoc and does not allow for a more focused and longer-term development.

The Estonian Civil Society Development Concept (EKA) that was adopted by the Estonian Parliament in 2002 is a helpful measure for HRAW NGOs. It established specific means of support such as the National Foundation for Civil Society and Development Plans for the Civil Society which support NGOs. As some observers noted, unlike other compacts in other countries, the civil society is not involved in the review of implementation\textsuperscript{11}. Overall, the NGO-government relationship seems to be well structured and supportive, thanks to the progressive attitude of the Estonian government.

4. Overall funding situation and specifically for HRAW NGOs.

The funding situation of NGOs in Estonia is considered by the 2009 USAID NGO Sustainability Index as consolidated. The Sustainability Index reports that:

“The NGOs hit hardest by the economic crisis were those who received funding primarily from the public sector or from the businesses. The distribution from the gambling tax, one of the major sources of funding for Estonian NGOs decreased more than 30 percent. NGOs that received their income from sources like EU funds, membership fees and individual donations did not feel the decline as strongly…. Estonians’s willingness to volunteer, engage in charitable activities and participate in public life has been growing during the economic crisis.”

In 2008 Sustainability Index, the report mentioned that:

*The amount of private donations went up in the last few years. In 2007, around 280 million EEK ($22.5 million) in donations was reported to the Tax and Customs Board. A growing number of NGOs, mostly in the fields of health and child welfare, run regular campaigns for donations by encouraging people to call or text to charitable phone numbers. Swedbank opened its donation portal where people can easily make online donations to NGOs who have been previously approved by a selection committee of bank and NGO representatives...

The worsening economic situation has already hit organizations that depend on donations from businesses. Some NGOs who earn income from selling goods or services have indicated a decline in demand. On the other hand, the demand for some social services such as unemployment assistance has increased, although people’s ability to pay for services, and outside funding, have decreased. Cuts have already been made in public budgets, both on national and local levels”

The HRAW NGOs face difficulties in raising domestic private funding. They rely on funding from traditional sources such as Open Estonia Foundation or from international organizations, most notably of European origin, such as European Agency for Fundamental Rights, DG Justice and also from a variety of international partners (both public and private) in Europe and USA. There are some accounts of local

\textsuperscript{10} Neworks of the Fundamental Rights Agency - ENAR, RAXEN, Fundamental Rights Platform, CIVITAS International, CCN (Consumer Citizenship Network), DARE (Democracy and Human Rights in Europe), European Civic Forum, NECE (Networking European Citizenship Education), Politeia (European Network for Citizenship and Democracy), Transparency International, etc.

\textsuperscript{11} A European Framework Agreement with Civil Societ yfor a Less Distant European Union?: A comparison of national compacts. European Citizen Action Service and Open Estonia Foundation, January 2009
corporate funding. However, the information gained through direct interviews has not provided much insight into this aspect.

5. International Sources of Funding for HRAWs

Below are stated major existing international sources of funding for Estonian HRAWs. It should be noted, however, that most of these funding sources are not operated as open grant calls or competitions, but are specific, targeted programs that cooperate with national NGOs and provide financial support for specific projects aligned with the donors’ strategies or represent elements of larger programs or initiatives. The list is not exhaustive, but only indicative.

- European Network Against Racism (ENAR), an EU-wide network of more than 600 organizations working to combat racism in all the EU member states. ENAR lists all relevant calls for proposals issued by the European Commission relevant to anti-racism and anti-discrimination work which allow civil society to apply for EU funding for specific projects.\(^{12}\)

- The Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) – see Chapter V. The Agency focuses on the situation of fundamental rights in the EU and its 27 Member States. Candidate Countries and countries which have concluded a stabilisation and association agreement with the EU can be invited to participate in Agency’s work following a special procedure.\(^{13}\)

- Directorate General for Justice of the European Commission provides funding to support its key objectives by a Framework programme. There are several framework programmes that address the issue of human rights, primarily Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Funding Programme, DAPHNE III Funding Programme and others. In each of these programmes calls for proposals are announced.

- European Program for Integration and Migration (EPIM) was initiated in 2005 by NEF, the Network of European Foundations, a collaborative effort between 12 European foundations. It aims to strengthen the role played by NGOs active on migration and integration issues in advocating for a European agenda that benefits migrants and host communities. Its second phase ran from 2008 until 2011. Grants were made available for short and longer projects (up to 3 years). In 2012 EPIM launched yet another call for proposals.

Other sources of funding that Estonian HRAWs have used include:

- King Baudouin Foundation (Belgium)
- The Hansard Society for Parliamentary Democracy (Great Britain)
- Netherlands Helsinki Committee (Netherlands)
- Dutch Foreign Ministry
- Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations (Netherlands)

\(^{12}\) http://www.enar-eu.org/
\(^{13}\) www.fra.europa.eu
\(^{14}\) http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/intro/funding_intro_en.htm
\(^{15}\) http://www.epim.info/
\(^{16}\) Atlantic Philanthropies (Ireland), Barrow-Cadbury Trust (UK), Compagnia di San Paolo (Italy), European Cultural Foundation (Netherlands), Freundenberg Stiftung (Germany), Fondation Bernheim (Belgium), Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian (Portugal), Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (UK), King Baudouin Foundation (Chairing foundation - Belgium), Oak Foundation (UK), Robert Bosch Stiftung (Germany), Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fund (UK).
6. Domestic funding sources for NGOs

NGOs are eligible applicants for various funding resources domestically. In the elaboration process of the Estonian Civil Society Concept the following funding instruments of Estonian NGOs were included:

The National Foundation for Civil Society (NFCS). It was established according to the decision of Estonian government in 2007 as an independent legal entity governed by a private law. The foundation’s a goal is to help building the capacity of Estonian non-profit organizations, to develop civil society and shape the environment that fosters civic action. NFCS was registered in 2008. Its strategy is based on three lines: 1) to strengthen NGOs to be able to cooperate and execute social change, 2) to support innovative ideas and knowledge of civil society and 3) to develop and advocate for the civil society through research, analysis and campaigns and support national advocacy and umbrella NGOs. To meet these strategies it organises grant-making programs around the first two areas and the third area is an operational activity of the foundation. Grants range between $10,000 – $20,000 and may last up to 2 years. The awarded grants so far address issues of NGO cooperation, volunteerism, community activism and many other issues. The human rights and accountability of government issues are supported as well, but only in a very small numbers, which may reflect a low number of applications in these areas as well. In addition to these three areas the Foundation initiated in 2009 the Endowment-Support Fund – NGOs Against Corruption. Through this Fund the Foundation wants to create an opportunity for other donors (various legal and physical entities) to support anti-corruption activities of NGOs facilitated by grants from the Foundation. The government oversight over the Foundation is conducted by the Ministry of Interior. The Foundation is governed by a Supervisory Board which has a 50/50 parity between state and NGO representatives that are recommended by NGOs and the Joint Committee for Civil Society Development Concept. It is financed by the state budget. For 2008 – 2011 the state allocated 20 million EEK annually ($1.6 million). While the Foundation is certainly a progressive public funding instrument, it is a result of political consensus and there are risks related to its future as well.

Another source of NGO funding that is concerned with the organizational sustainability and capacity development of NGOs and the environment for civil society is the Norway/EEA Financial Mechanism’s NGO Fund with its budget of 36.5 million EEK ($2.9 million) for three years. Similarly, the NGO Fund of the Swiss Cooperation Programme at the moment in the formation process with plans to support the activities of NGOs located in less favorable regions with the financial capacity of 23,7 million Estonian kroons ($1,6 million).

Regional development programmes include:

- Programme for Local Initiative, 24 million Estonian kroons in 2007;

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17 [http://kysk.ee/?s=21](http://kysk.ee/?s=21)
18 [http://kysk.ee/?s=23](http://kysk.ee/?s=23)
19 Regional Development Programmes, [http://www.siseministeerium.ee/9670](http://www.siseministeerium.ee/9670)
Three Ministries allocate grants to support small projects. Programme for Local Investments is also financed by gambling tax.

An excellent example is Youth Work Act\textsuperscript{21}, according to which the Ministry of Education and Research supports the activities of youth associations and allocates annual grants. The Act defines a youth association, sets the framework of general rules for allocating grants, e.g. the entry of a youth association in the Register of Youth Associations of the Ministry of Education and Research is the basis for awarding an annual grant, and authorises the Ministry of Education and Research to elaborate specific regulations for funding.\textsuperscript{22}

Other sources of support are:

- Cultural Endowment of Estonia and its structures in different counties.\textsuperscript{23}
- Environmental Investment Centre\textsuperscript{24}
- Integration Foundation\textsuperscript{25}
- Rural Development Foundation\textsuperscript{26}
- Estonian National Culture Foundation\textsuperscript{27}

In order to consult the NGOs active in rural areas, organise trainings and distribute information, NGO consultants are employed by County Development Centres\textsuperscript{28}. NGOs also have some possibilities to use the county development funds.\textsuperscript{29}

The projects of developing and strengthening NGOs are also supported by foundations established by individuals and private legal entities, including the Foundation Dharma\textsuperscript{30} “Stars to Shine” programme of Hansapank etc.

Funding possibilities of local governments are gradually increasing. Many local governments have included in their budget funds to support NGOs and elaborated respective procedures.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item [20] Gambling Tax Board, \url{http://hmn.riik.ee/?id=1086}
\item [21] Youth Work Act, \url{https://www.riigiteataja.ee/ert/act.jsp?id=12851236}
\item [22] Conditions and Procedure for Applying and Allocating Annual Grant to Youth Associations. Regulation No. 14 of the Minister of Education and Research of 1 March 2004, \url{https://www.riigiteataja.ee/ert/act.jsp?id=714478}
\item [23] Cultural Endowment of Estonia, \url{http://veeb.kulka.ee}
\item [24] Environmental Investment Centre, \url{http://www.kik.ee/?op=body&id=3}
\item [25] Integration Foundation, \url{http://www.meis.ee/est/konkursid/index.php?show=konkursid}
\item [26] Rural Development Foundation, \url{http://www.mes.ee}
\item [27] Estonian National Culture Foundation, \url{http://www.erkf.ee/index.php?nid=8}
\item [28] County Development Centres, \url{http://www.eas.ee/?id=306}
\item [29] County Development Funds, \url{http://www.eas.ee/?id=710}
\item [30] Foundation Dharma, \url{http://www.dharma.ee/index.php?m1=81&lang=2}
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Estonian NGOs have also access to the European Union Structural Funds. During the elaboration of the Civil Society Concept, the planning of grants for the period 2007-2013 took place. NGO representatives participated in the respective committees. A large part of the EU financial aid is allocated through various measures to foster regional and local development. The measure for renewing villages is envisioned within the framework of Rural Life Development Programme and the LEADER Programme and covers most of the Estonian rural local governments.

In Estonia various HRAW NGOs use also funding from the following public institutions:

- Ministry of Education and Research;
- Tallin City Government;
- University of Tallinn;
- Eurocollege, University of Tartu;
- Citizenship and Migration Board;
- Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications;
- Consumer Protection Board;
- Non-estonians Integration Foundation;
- BDA Estonia;
- Tallinn Education Department;
- DELFI.

### 3.2 Estonia: Sources

**A. List of HRAWs (web contacts)**

- Estonian Human Rights Center (http://www.humanrights.ee/eng/)
- Estonian Institute for Human Rights (http://www.eihr.ee/Eng/IndexEng.html)
- Legal Information Center for Human Rights (http://www.lichr.ee/main/)
- Transparency Estonia (www.transparency.ee)
- The Jaan Tonnison Institute http://www.jti.ee/index.php
- The Estonian Patient Advocacy Association

**B. List of Respondents**

- Infrastructure NGO Director, Tallin
- Foundation Director, Tallin
C. Resources

2) Estonian Patients Advocacy Association, www.epey.ee
4) European Program for Integration and Migration, http://www.epim.info/
9) The Legal and Information Center for Human Rights, http://www.lichr.ee
10) The Jaan Tonnison Institute, www.jti.ee