

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Estonia

**CAPITAL:** Tallinn

**SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT:** Unitary Multiparty Republic

**AREA:** 45,100 Sq Km (17,413 Sq Mi)

**ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION** 1,535,000

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**LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHY:** Estonia is a former republic of the USSR. It is bound by Latvia to the south, Russia to the east, the Baltic Sea to the west and the Gulf of Finland

to the north. In general, the country is low lying with ridges and hills that rise in the interior and to the southeast. Sharply indented cliffs line a narrow, low lying strip along the northeast coast whilst a broad plain along the west coast is low and sandy. More than 30% of the land area is waterlogged and the largest of Estonia's islands are Saaremaa and Hiiumaa. The principal river is the Ema which flows into Lake Peipus. Major Cities (pop. est.); Tallinn 442,700, Tartu 105,800, Narva 79,100, Kohtla-Jarve 72,700, Parnu 52,000 (1994). Land Use; forested 48%, pastures 8%, agricultural-cultivated 27%, other 17% (1993).

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**CLIMATE:** Estonia has a transitional climate from maritime along the coastal region to continental in the interior. Average annual precipitation varies from 610 to 710 mm (24 to 28 inches) while average temperatures ranges are from -3 to -7 degrees Celsius (27 to 20 degrees Fahrenheit) in January to 15 to 18 degrees Celsius (60 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit) in July.

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**PEOPLE:** The principal ethnic majority are the Estonians who account for 62% of the population while 28% are Russians, 3% are Ukrainians and 3% are Belarussians. Other ethnic minorities include Latvians, Finnish, Lithuanians, Moldovans, Georgians, Tartars, Jews and Germans.

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**DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS:** Density; 34 persons per sq km (88 persons per sq mi) (1993). Urban-Rural; 71.3% urban, 28.7% rural (1992). Sex Distribution; 46.8% male, 53.2% female (1992). Life Expectancy at Birth; 64.7 years male, 74.9 years female (1990). Age Breakdown; 22% under 15, 21% 15 to 29, 22% 30 to 44, 18% 45 to 59, 12% 60 to 74, 5% 75 and over (1991). Birth Rate; 12.3 per 1,000 (1991). Death Rate; 12.6 per 1,000 (1991). Increase Rate; -0.3 per 1,000 (1991). Infant Mortality Rate; 12.4 per 1,000 live births (1990).

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**RELIGIONS:** Mostly Christians of the Lutheran and Orthodox Churches.

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**LANGUAGES:** The official language is Estonian while Russian is also widely spoken and each ethnic minority also has its own language.

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**EDUCATION:** Aged 25 or over and having attained: no formal schooling 2.2%, primary 39.7%, secondary 45.1%, higher 13.7% (1989). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 99.7% (1989).

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**MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993:** On Aug. 20, 1991 Estonia declared its independence, although prior to independence its history was closely tied with that of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). In Mar. 1953 Yosef Stalin died and was succeeded by Georgy Malenkov who was in turn forced to relinquish the party leadership to Nikita Khrushchev after a little over one week in power. In 1955 the Warsaw pact, militarily aligned the Soviet Union with other communist countries and in Nov. 1956 the Soviet Red Army invaded Hungary to quell uprisings. In 1957 three communist ministers unsuccessfully attempted to depose Khrushchev which resulted in their expulsion from the central committee. In 1962 under Khrushchev's rule the USSR was involved in the Cuban Missile crisis and in the same year relations with China were broken off as a result of ideological differences. In Oct. 1964 Khrushchev was forced to retire and was succeeded by Leonid Brezhnev. In Aug. 1968 the Warsaw Pact forces led by the Red Army invaded Czechoslovakia to halt their Prague Spring reforms. In 1977 Brezhnev was elected President. In Nov. 1982 Brezhnev died and was succeeded by Yuri Andropov, the former head of the KGB. Andropov introduced limited economic reforms and established an anti-corruption program. In Feb 1984 Andropov died and was succeeded by Konstantin Chernenko who in turn died on Mar. 10, 1985. On Mar. 11, 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev was elected as Chernenko's successor and Gorbachev embarked on a program which restructured the USSR's relations with the West. Gorbachev also established Glasnost (openness) as well as Perestroika (restructuring and reform). In Apr. 1986 a meltdown in the reactor of the Chernobyl nuclear power station in Ukraine sent radioactive fallout across northern Europe. In Dec. 1987 the USSR and USA signed the Treaty on Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF). In Feb. 1988 a dispute erupted between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh which resulted in mass demonstrations and strikes in the two republics. In Dec. 1988 an earthquake in Armenia killed some 50,000 people. In Apr. 1989 troops violently repressed demonstrations in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. In Dec. 1989 the Lithuanian Parliament adopted multiparty politics. In Jan. 1990 Gorbachev visited Lithuania and was met by some 250,000 pro-independence demonstrators. In Feb. 1990 some 18 people were killed in riots over housing discrimination in Tajikistan. On Mar. 30, 1990 Estonia declared a transitional period to its independence from the Soviet Union. In May 1990 Boris Yeltsin was elected President of the Russian Federation and on Nov. 1, 1990 launched a 500 day plan to give the Russian Republic a free market economy. In June 1990 Nakhichevan an Azerbaijani enclave bordering Iran declared its intention for a unification with Iran while a civil war was escalating between Azerbaijan and Armenia. In the same month around 150 people were killed during ethnic clashes in Kyrgyzstan. In Jan. 1991 another 15 people were killed as the

Red Army seized a television station in Lithuania while in Latvia the Soviet Black Berets killed 5 people in an attack on the ministry building. In the same month troops were being deployed in Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Moldova. In Mar. 1991 pro-Yeltsin demonstrators held a mass rally. On Aug. 18, 1991 as Gorbachev was vacationing in the Crimea, the Politburo hard liners attempted a coup to remove Gorbachev from power through the declaration of a State of Emergency under the control of a State Committee. Almost immediately republic leaders declared the emergency committee illegal as well as unconstitutional and began to barricade their parliaments as troops and tanks were deployed throughout the republics. By Aug. 20 senior officers had refused to order their troops to use force against the civilians and on Aug. 21, 1991 the coup collapsed as troops were ordered to return to their barracks. Immediately following the unsuccessful coup many republics suspended or purged the communist party and on Sept. 5, 1991 after 3 days of debate the 74 years of centralized communist control came to an end. On Aug. 20, 1991 Estonia declared an end to the transitional period to independence and was officially recognized by the Soviet State Council on Sept. 6, 1991. On Sept. 17, 1991 Estonia was admitted to the UN and to the CSCE on Oct. 15, 1991. Also in 1991 Estonia banned the Communist Party and seized its property, and began to form close economic ties with Finland. In June 1992 Estonia introduced its own currency the Kroon which was tied to the German DM. On Sept. 20, 1992 free elections were won by the right-wing parties, although only Estonians were allowed to vote. On Oct. 5, 1992 Lennart Meri of the Fatherland coalition was elected President by the parliament (Riigikogu). Also in 1992 Russia agreed to withdraw its 15,000 troops stationed in Estonia, although withdrawals were halted on Oct. 29, 1992 while a several banks collapsed earlier in the year. In July 1993 Pres. Meri signed a controversial law on aliens in Estonia following revisions suggested by a team of European experts. On Oct. 17, 1993 municipal and regional elections were held while uncertainties between the President, the Cabinet and the Parliament developed following his refusal to endorse a number of important laws passed by the Parliament. In Nov. 1993 there was a opposition motion of no confidence in Prime Minister Mart Laar and his coalition government. Also in 1993 foreign relations with Moscow were further strained over the continued presence of Russian troops in Estonia and their failure to withdraw in accordance with a UN resolution handed down on Nov. 25, 1992.

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**CURRENCY:** The official currency is the Kroon (EK) divided into 100 Senti.

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**ECONOMY:** Gross National Product; USD \$1,663,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$85,800,000 (1993). Imports; EEK 22,553,000,000 (1994). Exports; EEK 17,377,000,000 (1994). Tourism Receipts; USD \$51,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; EEK -5,176,000,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 856,000 or 54.7% of total population (1989). Unemployed; 8.1% (1994).

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**MAIN TRADING PARTNERS:** Its main trading partners are the CIS, Germany, Hungary, Czech Fed. Rep., Slovakia and France.

**MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS:** Berries, Cotton, Dolomite, Fish, Fruits, Grains, Limestone, Livestock, Oil Shale, Potatoes, Timber, Vegetables.

**MAJOR INDUSTRIES:** Agriculture, Building Materials, Construction, Fishing, Forestry, Mining Equipment, Mining, Petrochemicals, Textiles.

**MAIN EXPORTS:** Cement, Cotton, Electronic Goods, Mining Equipment, Paper, Processed Foods, Textiles.

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**TRANSPORT:** Railroads; route length 1,026 km (638 mi) (1991), passenger-km 1,273,000,000 (791,000,000 passenger-mi) (1991), cargo ton-km 6,977,000,000 (4,779,000,000 short ton-mi) (1990). Roads; length 14,811 km (9,203 mi) (1991). Vehicles; cars 261,086 (1991), trucks and buses 85,585 (1991). Merchant Marine; vessels 234 (1992), deadweight tonnage 680,367 (1992). Air Transport; passenger-km 1,046,000,000 (650,000,000 passenger-mi) (1991), cargo ton-km 6,000,000 (4,109,000 short ton-mi) (1991).

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**COMMUNICATIONS:** Daily Newspapers; total of 7 with a total circulation of 239,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 926,000 (1989). Television; receivers 600,000 (1993). Telephones; units 358,300 (1993).

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**MILITARY:** 2,500 (1993) total active duty personnel with 100% army while military expenditure accounts for 0.8% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP). (World Average 3%)