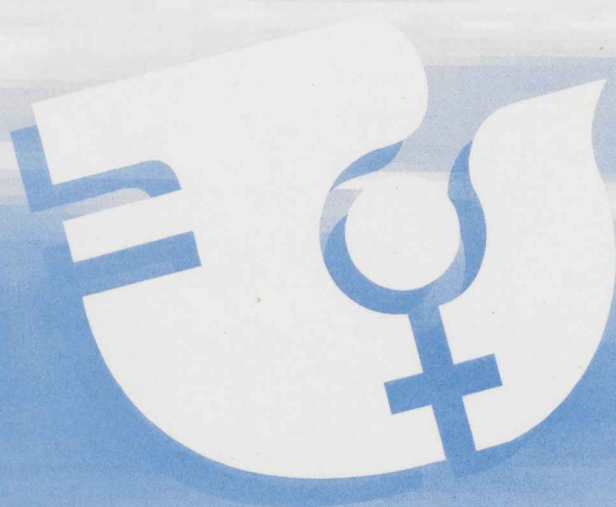


The fourth world
conference on women
"Action for equality
development and peace"



Estonian women in a changing society

National report of Estonia



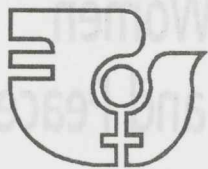
The Fourth World Conference on Women Action for Equality, Development and Peace

The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, Action for Equality, Development and Peace, was held in Beijing on September 4-12, 1995. The Estonian National Report which has been written according to the guidelines of the Secretary of the Conference, is a contribution to the elaboration of the Conference's final document - Platform for Action. At the same time, the report represents one of the points of departure for Estonia's governmental structure, non-governmental organizations as well as individuals in promoting equality between women and men.

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Estonian Women in a Changing Society

NATIONAL REPORT OF ESTONIA 1995



The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, Action for Equality, Development and Peace will take place in Beijing on September 4-15, 1995. The Estonian National Report which has been written according to the guidelines of the Secretariat of the Conference is to be considered Estonia's contribution to the elaboration of the Conference's final document - Platform for Action. At the same time, the report represents one of the points of departure for Estonia's governmental structures, non-governmental organizations as well as individuals in promoting equality between women and men.

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Introduction: Estonian Women in a Changing Society 1.

For Estonian women the 20th century has been full of dramatic turning points. The birth of the Republic of Estonia in 1918 provided the opportunity for several outstanding Estonian women to rise to prominent positions in culture and politics. The years of independence increased the educated urban woman's role in society without jeopardizing the traditional values attached to the home and the farm which represented the quintessence of an Estonian's life style.

World War II and Estonia's incorporation into the Soviet Union destroyed thousands of Estonian homes. The victims of Stalinist terror included tens of thousands of women and children who were deprived of their homeland, shelter and fathers' and husbands' support. The hardships failed to defeat the Estonian woman's spirit and instead provided her with resilience and strength. Despite the repressive nature of the Soviet regime and numerous restrictions she remained the chief preserver of the national culture and the language. She managed to convey to her children the values and endeavours precious for the nation. Women's desire for education was not stifled, and during the past decades women's average educational level even exceeds the men's.

The Soviet-installed system caused women to forget about womanliness and weakness. Estonian women participated equally with men in occupational work and

took the leading role in education and health care. Possessing a high degree of perserverance and adaptability women pursued an impressive amount of public activities though frequently with not much enthusiasm due to their ideological contents.

A compensation was the sphere of culture: during the Soviet period Estonia ranked first per capita in book publications and frequency of theatre attendances. Women were the most active readers of books, singers in choirs, and visitors of art exhibitions. Under the Soviet rule, thanks to women's attitude, thirst for culture and moral spirit Estonians managed to preserve the mental resources of the nation. This helped make way for the new awakening.

In 1988 the new national resurgence and movement for political liberation brought thousands of Estonian women into politics. At mass rallies held at the culmination of the "singing revolution" women sang themselves out of the fetters of the occupation years. Rally leaders who addressed hundreds of thousands of Estonians demanding complete political and economic independence from the USSR included several female politicians who were well-known throughout the country.

The regained independence, however, affected women's lives in a contradictory way. Estonia's commitment to building a free, open and democratic society has

brought for women not only joy. The transition tends oftentimes to be painful and arduous.

Following the initial enthusiasm a large portion of women have withdrawn from politics. The economic and social crisis which Estonia fell into at the outset of the independence period struck families with children and elderly people very severely. It is chiefly the mothers and grandmothers who have to pay the price for freedom.

The problems confronted by women in a transitional society are the focus of Estonia's report to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

First,

let us refer to the changes in the economy which have given rise to rapid material differentiation, changes in the structure of employment and the reduced use of children's daycare facilities. From a woman's perspective it means mounting social stress, anxiety in connection with coping and fear of unemployment. Furthermore, in the labour market preference for a position will still go first to a male.

Secondly,

there are changes in the access to education, culture and medical care. The transition to a market economy has been accompanied by growing competition in the area of public services meaning increased expenditures by families on housing, medical care, education and culture. Occurring simultaneously with material stratification is the rapid social and cultural stratification. Equal access to education and culture, and the provision for all children equal opportunities of development have become a pressing issue.

Thirdly,

there are changes in the social status and roles of women. Entering a competition-driven society, women feel pushed out of leading and influential posts in the society and the economy. Estonian policy is increasingly assuming the character of male power battles. Social problems, morals, aesthetics, and human relationships which are deeply rooted female concerns have no place in those battles. This leads to significant differences in the female and male outlook of the world and value systems. On the one hand, it is a welcome change in comparison to the Soviet uniform society. On the other, however, it serves to strengthen attitudes of male superiority vis-à-vis men and women as equal partners. The tendency to see in women only sexual partners rather than equal participants has become increasingly apparent. Hidden as well as unhidden prostitution is growing.

Fourthly,

social stress, stiffening competition, economic restructuring and the climbing cost of living have major implications for the health and family life of the population. The instability of families has grown substantially. The young are weighing family planning more seriously. The most critical social problem in Estonia has become a dramatic decline in the birth rate. Rising steeply are numbers of violent deaths and accidents concerning, in particular, young and middle-aged men which contributes toward negative birth rate and threat of depopulation.

These recently emerged anxieties and problems pose a new challenge to the endurance and activity of Estonian women. And yet, however high the cost of freedom and independence, Estonians are definitely

prepared to pay it. Estonian women are determined to find new opportunities and solutions in order to cope under the re-established independence and carry the responsibility for the preservation and progress of the nation.

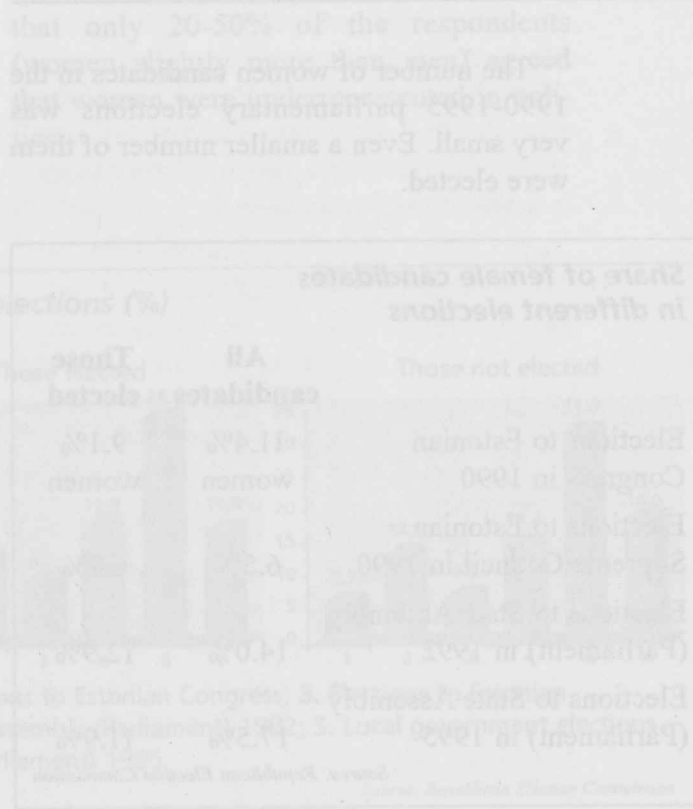
Estonia is building up a free and democratic society in which women's equal participation in designing the country's development, formulating its legislative infrastructure, shaping new social relations, patterns of behaviour and values is of critical

importance. Estonian women's cooperation with women's organizations in Nordic countries, member-countries of the European Union and other Eastern and Central European countries has been of invaluable support to the Estonian women's movement. Estonian women as free and equal partners are willing to participate together with their sisters in creating a new world civilization of the new millennium.

During the period of Soviet occupation, the position of women in the Estonian society was not equal to that of men. The Soviet system was based on the principle of equality, but in practice, women were often treated as second-class citizens. The Soviet system was based on the principle of equality, but in practice, women were often treated as second-class citizens. The Soviet system was based on the principle of equality, but in practice, women were often treated as second-class citizens.

The picture of women's participation in the Estonian society has changed significantly since the restoration of independence. The number of women in the Estonian Parliament has increased from 11.9% in 1995 to 25.5% in 1999. This increase is a result of the efforts of the Estonian women's movement and the support of the international community. The Estonian women's movement has been active in promoting the participation of women in the political and social life of the country. The support of the international community has been crucial in this process. The Estonian women's movement has been active in promoting the participation of women in the political and social life of the country. The support of the international community has been crucial in this process.

This graph shows the share of female candidates in the Estonian Parliament elections from 1995 to 1999. The share of female candidates has increased from 11.9% in 1995 to 25.5% in 1999. This increase is a result of the efforts of the Estonian women's movement and the support of the international community. The Estonian women's movement has been active in promoting the participation of women in the political and social life of the country. The support of the international community has been crucial in this process.



2. Women in Higher Bodies of Power

Women took a very active part in political processes during the period of preparation for independence from 1988-1991.

Movements such as the fight against mandatory conscription in the Soviet Army had its start and ultimate realization due to the instigation of women's organizations. This grass-root involvement was and continues to be the main means which women use to express their political will.

A step further would be participation in the activities of 30 political parties which have been registered in Estonia, and creation of a women's sections in some of them. Although certain growth of interest in joining political parties has been observable, it does not necessarily mean the wish to actively participate. Conservatism and negative experience of the 50 years of Soviet power seem to be inhibiting factors here.

Women in Parliament

The number of women candidates in the 1990-1995 parliamentary elections was very small. Even a smaller number of them were elected.

Share of female candidates in different elections

	All candidates	Those elected
Elections to Estonian Congress in 1990	11.4% women	9.1% women
Elections to Estonian Supreme Council in 1990	6.5%	6.7%
Elections to State Assembly (Parliament) in 1992	14.0%	12.9%
Elections to State Assembly (Parliament) in 1995	17.5%	11.9%

Source: Republican Election Commission

Even the elections to the Estonian Congress demonstrated a negative attitude toward women although the number of deputies elected to this representative body was 4.5 times higher than in case of the Parliament. Making a similar comparison with the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in the spring of 1989 (5.6% of the candidates were women, 5.4% were elected) it seems that the proportion of women candidates has still slightly increased. The 1995 parliamentary elections resulted in the 11.9 percent share of women MPs. It appears to harmonize with the worldwide tendency towards decreased numbers of women in higher decision-making bodies.

A similar situation is observable in other electable political organs, e.g. the Constitutional Assembly or the Estonian

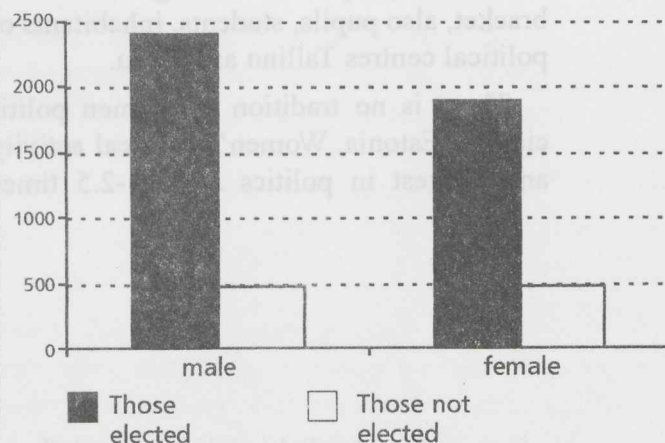
Committee: approximately 10-12% of those elected were women.

The same is true of the 1992 presidential elections. Lagle Parek who was much favoured by the public because of her anti-Soviet activities gained few votes - 4.2% for the main reason that a woman president in today's Estonia would still be inconceivable.

Three women were appointed to ministerial positions in 1992 - Lagle Parek, interior minister; Liia Hänni, reform minister and Marju Lauristin, social minister. After the 1995 parliamentary elections Estonia has only two women ministers: Siiri Oviir, social minister, and Liina Tõnisson, economic minister. In local government elections on October 17, 1993 mandates to local governments totalled 3,513. Among the elected 20.7% were women. Out of the total of 253 chairpersons of municipal councils 19 (7.5%), of 255 heads of municipalities and mayors 36 (14.1%) are women. Among 15 county governors no women can be found.

The picture is different depending on the region. For instance, alongside with the municipal councils without a single woman we can find councils with over 50% of women. For an outsider, the limited number

Average number of votes per person at the elections to the Estonian State Assembly (Parliament)

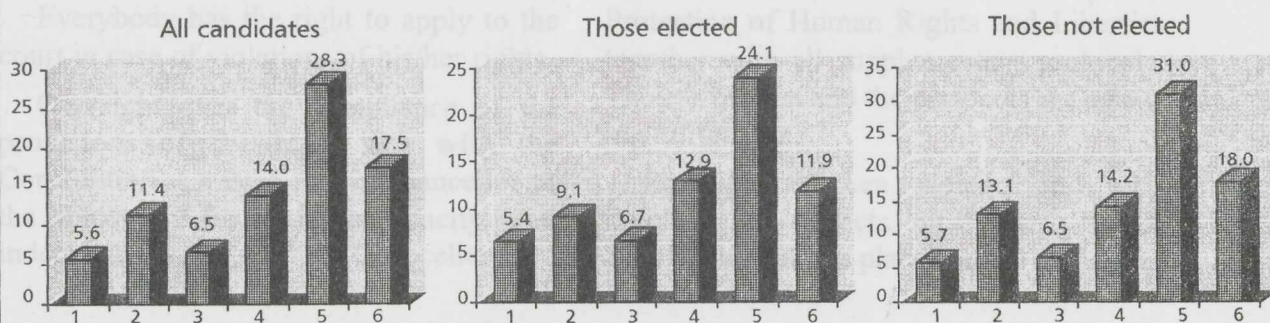


Source: Republican Election Commission

of women in electable political organs seems without a doubt undemocratic. It certainly does not feel like this to our politicians, people or even to women themselves. There is no conflicting question here between men and women since the latter do not protest.

The two 1992 national surveys revealed that only 20-50% of the respondents (women slightly more than men) agreed that women were underrepresented in politics.

Share of female candidates in different elections (%)



1. Elections to the USSR Supreme Soviet; 2. Elections to Estonian Congress; 3. Elections to Estonian Supreme Council; 4. Elections to Estonian State Assembly (Parliament) 1992; 5. Local government elections 1993; 6. Elections to Estonian State Assembly (Parliament) 1995

Source: Republican Election Commission

2. Women in Higher Bodies of Power

Women politicians are looked upon unfavourably by a great number of leaders of public opinion, i.e. people with higher education, people in the highest income bracket, also pupils, students, inhabitants of political centres Tallinn and Tartu.

There is no tradition of women politicians in Estonia. Women's political activity and interest in politics are 1.3-2.5 times

lower than men's. Also the feminist ideas have not been very popular among our women and many women's organizations tend to be quite conservative. Given this background it is more than likely that women's participation in politics, in the near future at least, will not grow significantly.

Women in Diplomatic Work

One hundred eighty-three people hold diplomatic posts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia in 1995. Of them, 57 are women (31.1%) and 126 men (68.9%). Since the fall of 1991 when Estonia returned to independence the proportion of women in these positions has somewhat increased. Of the 125 diplomats engaged in the central apparatus of the Ministry 46 are women (36.8%) and 79 are men (63.2%). All three vice chancellors are men, of the total of 10 departmental heads 4 are women and 6 are men.

Of the 58 diplomatic posts (excl ambassadors) in foreign representations of the Republic of Estonia women hold 11 (19%) and men 47 (81%).

Estonia's foreign representations are in twelve cases run by an ambassador of whom only one is a woman.

Given the facts, it is evident that in diplomatic posts there is a clear male-dominance, especially as regards foreign representations.

Legislation Guaranteeing Women's Rights in Estonia 3.

In the Republic of Estonia which regained its independence in 1992 all human rights are guaranteed by its Constitution, Parliament and the judicial system. Article 123 of the Constitution stipulates that the Republic of Estonia does not conclude foreign treaties which contradict the Constitution. If Estonian laws or other acts contradict foreign treaties ratified by the Parliament the provisions of the foreign treaty are applied.

One of the primary instruments of protection of human rights is the court. The court as an independent body has the power to declare unconstitutional whatever law, legal act or procedure in the event it violates women's constitutional rights and liberties or in any other way infringes on the Constitution.

Everybody has the right to apply to the court in case of violations of his/her rights.

Oversight over the compliance of the provisions of the legal acts with the Constitution is vested in the Chancellor of the Ministry of Justice in his capacity as an independent agent, and the Chancellery.

Estonia has joined the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women which entered into force on November 20, 1991. The translation of the convention was published in Riigi Teataja, March 8, 1995.

Estonia has also joined other human rights conventions, e.g. the Convention against Torture and Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

In May 1993, Estonia signed the Convention of the Council of Europe on Protection of Human Rights and Liberties together with all supplementary protocols. The convention and the protocols are awaiting ratification.

Equality between women and men involves all aspects on human rights. Special emphasis is placed on the protection

of women against abuse in all areas of human activity; equality in the family and employment, and the economic and political participation on all levels.

In Estonia, there is no special law on gender equality and equal opportunities, however, these rights are guaranteed by the provisions of the Law on Labour and the Law on Family. According to Article 12 of

the Estonian Constitution all persons are equal before the law independent of the gender. Perceived inequality may be attributed to a lack of oversight over the execution of the provisions of the laws. No institutions responsible for guaranteeing gender equality have been established at any of the ministry or at the government in Estonia.

According to the Ministry of Social Affairs estimates the number of gainfully employed people declined in 1994 by 14,000 (from 654,000 to 640,000). The drop was primarily caused by hidden unemployment as well as a negative migration rate (2/3 of the emigrants were of occupationally active age). At the beginning of 1994, working-age people totalled 841,000. The 1994 labour force survey showed that women represented 51% of the labour force in Estonia where 79% of the employed women were from the 16-50 age bracket and where 79% were Estonians and 21% non-Estonians. The proportion of women with secondary or higher education sur-

passed the corresponding male figure. There were two times as many women of Estonian nationality with university education as non-Estonian women with similar education. Five per cent of working women held managerial positions, 45% were specialists and 23% were office and service workers. Seventeen per cent of the women were engaged in industry, 16% in the education and 14% in the health and social security systems.

Sixty-eight per cent of the women worked full-time (41 hours), 9% more than full-time and 16% part-time.

Wage earning opportunities broadened significantly in 1994 which appears primarily in an increase in the average wages. According to the data presented by the Department of Statistics in 1994 the average monthly wage equalled 1,743 kroons.

The male-female income differential grew considerably irrespective of the requirement of equal salary provided for in the Estonian legislation. The current wage level of female workers is only 60-85% of the

males. Female platers, printing press operators, programmers, etc. received only half of the salary of their male counterparts. The earnings of female legislators, top executives and managers made up 70.9% of the corresponding male indicators, of top specialists, writers and journalists 80.5% and unskilled labour 75.7%. The largest income was derived in the banking sector, power generation and processing industry.

Wage and Wage Discrepancies

Distribution of female and male employees and salaries according to basic occupations, 1992/1993 and 1994.

Occupation	% of Women	Hourly wages 1992/1993		% of Women	Hourly wages 1994	
		Men	Women		Men	Women
1. Legislators, high-ranking officials, managers	36.3	8.0/13.8	6.3/9.8	37.6	23.2	15.84
2. Highly qualified specialists	68.0	6.2/9.6	5.4/7.8	69.0	15.6	11.9
3. Technicians, middle-level specialists	68.3	5.6/10.9	4.4/6.6	67.5	16.6	10.0
4. Civil servants	86.7	4.7/7.0	4.2/6.1	88.4	10.8	9.0
5. Service and trade personnel	76.8	4.2/7.3	3.5/5.1	74.4	10.5	6.6
6. Skilled labour in agriculture, forestry and fishery	49.8	3.8/5.2	3.1/4.1	48.1	9.34	5.9
7. Skilled labour	24.3	5.6/8.6	4.5/6.4	24.9	13.0	9.3
8. Operators of semi-automatic and automatic equipment, motor vehicle drivers	24.6	5.1/7.9	4.8/6.8	25.0	11.7	9.5
9. Unskilled labour	58.3	3.5/4.6	2.7/3.5	59.6	7.0	5.1
Average:	51.1	5.3/8.5	4.2/6.1	51.7	13.2	9.1

Source: Estonian Board of Statistics

Women and Unemployment

In the 4th quarter of 1994 employment agencies were approached by 57,675 non-working jobseekers where 30,383 or 52.6% of them were women. The number of registered unemployed had by January 1, 1995 reached 12,670 with the share of women constituting 7,806 or 61.6%. This is an obviously frustrating trend for women in the structure of unemployment in comparison with 1992 and 1993. While in the 1st quarter of 1993 the number of unemployed men surpassed that of unemployed women and in the 2nd quarter of 1993 it was even, from then on the proportion of women in the total number of jobless has consistently risen.

The situation features significant regional differences. Female unemployment is much greater than male in Tallinn, Narva, Harjumaa and Ida-Virumaa. The primary cause has been the close-down of large industrial enterprises due to insufficient supplies of raw materials and an absence of markets. Causes for rural unemployment basically stem from the disintegration of the services sector. Reforms in the health care system are bound to cause an increase in the number of job-seekers. When men lost their jobs with the liquidation of collective farms they were usually hired as lumbermen or saw-mill workers. If they possessed building skills they started to commute to bigger

centres and towns. Women, however, incapable of performing such hard work and unable to travel long distances because of their commitment to home and children are threatened by long-term unemployment.

The specific problems surrounding the hiring of women have remained virtually unchanged. Still persistent is discrimination against expectant mothers and women with small children. The employer who has the choice of several applicants does not conclude an employment contract with women who cannot carry a full work load and are likely to stay at home with sick children.

Similar problems are experienced by pre-retirement-age women falling into the category of whose, in the opinion of employers, are oftentimes no more than fifty-year-old ladies. Complicating the situation further may be the fact that their education and training which provided them a living for decades is no longer relevant to the contemporary economic setting. The age reached and the expenses involved causes one to seriously question the benefit of retraining them. Certain occupations hold employer-dictated age limits particularly in women-dominated jobs like secretaries, saleswomen and service workers.

In Estonia there is increasing structural unemployment meaning that available in the labor market are job-seekers as well as vacancies, but the former fail to measure up to the employers' requirements in terms of education, speciality or qualifications. To improve the situation the employment agencies have launched a number of training courses addressing the specific needs of the unemployed and job-seekers together with corresponding scholarship schemes.

It is clear that women more than men have realized the importance of continued education and retraining. They understand that increased competitiveness in the labour market is feasible only by way of upgrading one's skills and qualifications. In the 4th quarter of 1994 training opportunities were

offered to a total of 4,783 persons (1,234 men and 3,549) either unemployed or in search of work. The current key training areas for women are the use of office equipment (personal computers) and accounting. A large number of young people without previous work experience have likewise benefitted from the courses arranged by

Unemployed women according to age 1992-1994

Quarter, year	Number of women	Age groups			
		16-24	25-49	50-55	55-...
I '92	1 448	353	993	102	
II '92	2 979	627	2 106	246	
III '92	4 367	868	3 049	450	
IV '92	7 431	1 678	5 060	693	
I '93	10 468	2 267	7 100	1 101	
II '93	9 797	1 956	6 590	1 251	
III '93	7 838	1 143	4 649	1 559	
IV '93	8 763	1 744	5 768	1 251	
I '94	10 908	1 949	7 567	1 392	
II '94	9 506	1 581	6 703	1 222	
III '94	7 292	1 298	5 033	961	
IV '94	7 806	1 356	5 514	897	39

Source: Labour Market Board

Unemployed men according to age 1992-1994

Quarter, year	Number of men	Age groups			
		16-24	25-54	55-60	60-...
I '92	960	280	559	121	
II '92	2 758	712	1 709	337	
III '92	4 363	842	2 780	741	
IV '92	7 463	1 531	4 692	1 240	
I '93	10 818	2 243	6 955	1 620	
II '93	9 816	1 986	6 103	1 727	
III '93*	7 360	1 143	4 649	1 559	
IV '93	7 451	1 302	4 468	1 681	
I '94	8 613	1 574	5 085	1 954	
II '94	7 222	1 355	4 260	1 607	
III '94	5 084	874	3 086	1 124	
IV '94	4 864	871	2 929	1 049	15

Source: Labour Market Board

**Registered unemployed
according to age 1992-1994**

Quarter, Number of year unem- ployed	Age groups		
	16-24	M 25-54 W 25-49	M 55-60 W 50-55
I '92	2 408	633	1 552 223
II '92	5 737	1 339	3 815 583
III '92	8 730	1 710	5 829 1 191
IV '92	14 894	3 209	9 752 1 933
I '93	21 286	4 510	14 055 2 721
II '93	19 593	3 922	12 693 2 978
III '93	15 198	2 458	10 102 2 638
IV '93	16 214	3 046	10 236 2 932
I '94	19 521	3 523	12 652 3 346
II '94	16 728	2 936	10 963 2 829
III '94	12 376	2 172	8 119 2 085
IV '94	12 670	2 227	8 443 11 946

Source: Labour Market Board

employment agencies. Of the female participants 1,083 or 30.5% belonged to the 16-24 age group.

Aside from the recent developments in Estonia as well as other countries, women still experience certain discriminatory treatment by employers who continue to stress the superiority of male labour by virtue of their allegedly greater capabilities, skills and strength. Women have to persistently prove their talents and qualifications to receive fair consideration by the employers. Progress in this field is highly apparent when we consider the number of female managers, decision-makers and employers in Estonia.

Women in Business

Even though private entrepreneurship as an economic phenomenon already started to be discussed in the late 1980s, an essential shift in the field occurred in 1990 simultaneously with the first wave of the establishment of privately-owned businesses. In 1988 roughly 1,000 companies were registered and by 1990 this figure had undergone a five-fold increase, more or less stabilizing in late 1994. Within the year 11,209 new enterprises were registered where the number of companies in the Estonian enterprise register totalled 55,652. The share of women business-owners has steadily increased. The share of women among those owning or running a business was in 1992 7%, in 1993 27.5% and in 1994 more than one-third. Excelling in this respect were Tallinn, Pärnu and Võru regions. The average 30% female participation in business activity makes Estonia easily comparable with such European countries as

Holland (33.0%), Belgium (28.7%) and Spain (25.9%). In family businesses the spouses often share ownership, or one of the spouses is employed by the other.

The most common drive behind going into business is the feeling of independence and the wish to test one's skills and capabilities. Another group of women set up a business to compensate for the liquidation of the former employer due to privatization or a close-down. The third category of women is comprised of young women re-entering the labor market after the interruption of their careers for child-rearing.

The major factor responsible for the rapidly swelling ranks of women entrepreneurs is the explosive growth of trade and service establishments. This, however, is not the only line of business women are engaged in. They run banks and publishing companies, tourist agencies and hotels,

computer and consultation firms and training institutions, etc.

Over the past few years women have had ready access to a wide range of long- and short-term business courses. With an established basic education only specific knowledge in such areas as business law, marketing, accounting and business plan compilation is needed. This expertise contributes to women's self-confidence which is so relevant for starting a business. The number of participants in the courses "How to Start Your Own Business" arranged by the Women's Training Centre of the Estonian Management Institute alone has reached 600 with follow-up courses in 1994 contributing another 3,000. Statistics show that two-fifths of the participants had higher education, and the same share specialized secondary or incomplete higher education. Four-fifths of the participants had an urban background. Rural women do not necessarily lack entrepreneurial qualities or commercial interests, but are short of the means to cover the cost of the courses, or have fewer opportunities for setting up a business.

The Republic of Estonia joined the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1921 and resumed its membership in 1992. There are three ILO Conventions which directly touch upon women's rights:

1. Convention 100: Equal Remuneration Convention (adopted in 1951).
2. Convention 111: Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (1958).

Currently underway are preparations for opening a Centre for Home Economics Training at Jämeda Training Counselling Bureau which in addition to the school sector is supposed to offer rural women courses on home-keeping, child-rearing as well as farm tourism and private enterprise. Almost all the counties have a Business Development Centre available for advisory services. Although the surveys demonstrate the existence of a direct correlation between increasing age and falling interest in business the corresponding courses have been attended by women from all age groups.

Estonia's transfer to its own currency in 1992 brought along radical changes in the small business situation. The rapidly decreasing numbers of vacant market niches were the cause for stricter requirements for business ideas. Difficulties in obtaining a bank loan which are so familiar to businesswomen all over the world serve as an additional major obstacle. To cope with the situation all-round encouragement should be given to the establishment of female entrepreneurs' networks. The increasing number of women's organizations is a testimonial to this already taking place.

Women's Issues and the International Labour Organization (ILO)

3. Convention 156: Employees with Family Responsibilities Convention (1981).

The Estonian ILO Council has begun work on ratifying conventions 100 and 111. The texts have been translated and reviewed by most of the departments.

5. Education

The prestige of the printed word and the rate of literacy have in Estonia always been remarkably high. At the end of the 19th century (according to the 1881 census) nearly all rural people could read with the percentage of the those able to write amounting to 30-40%. Based on data from the 1922 census the male literacy rate equalled 92.7% and the female one 86.0%. Supplementing these figures were 2.8% of men and 7.4% of women who could only read. At this time Estonia's general literacy rate was somewhat higher than that in the neighbouring countries. Education was and still continues to be one of the most decisive criteria of social advancement.

The constitution of the Republic of Estonia of the interwar independence period (1918-1940) granted Estonian women the right to vote and created preconditions for the further realization of women's educational aspirations. In 1922, female secondary school pupils slightly outnumbered the male which was further confirmed by the 1934 census data recording somewhat larger numbers of females with complete secondary education in comparison with men.

By the end of the pre-World War II independence period Estonia had developed a fairly comprehensive and regionally dispersed system of vocational education. In

1939 the male-female proportion of trade school students was quite balanced keeping to the ratio 52% and 48% respectively.

As might be expected, in 1939 higher education was overwhelmingly male-dominated. The ranks of the graduates from Tartu University, the oldest and largest Estonian university (established in 1632), during the independence period included 4,179 men and 1,510 women (73% and 27% respectively). The number of students of Tallinn Technical University (established in 1936) was equal to 491 where 470 were men and 21 women.

During the Soviet period, the female level of education surpassed that of males. Statistics reveal that the proportion of women with university or specialized secondary education among employed specialists equalled in 1960 61%, in 1970 - 60% and in 1989 - 60%. Women's higher education level can be attributed to their higher primary and secondary school attendance rates (the latter is partly comparable with college education) : while up to 1959 men with university education outnumbered women in the working-age population, females were in the clear majority among the employees with general and specialized secondary education.

Estonia's present day situation is characterized by unprecedentedly high drop-out

rates from basic schools. The new legislation provides for universal compulsory education for up to 17-year-old persons. However, as of the 1st of October, 1994, according to the statistics by the Estonian Ministry of Culture and Education, out of

15-year-olds

5.9% of girls and 9.6% of boys,

16-year-olds

10.2% of girls and 17.3% of boys,

17-year-olds

19.2% of girls and 27.9% of boys

were not studying. Boys are responsible for about two-thirds of the total number of drop-outs. Among those staying for the second year in the same form or the expelled from the basic school are primarily boys, i.e. from two-thirds up to three-fourths.

Prevalent for years has been a female majority in general secondary schools and the male students' preference for vocational educational institutions.

It is no surprising, therefore, that as of October 1, 1994, girls constituted among the 15-17-year-old general secondary schools students (i.e. forms 10-12) 56% and boys 44%. Worth noting in that secondary school drop-outs are not necessarily boys who constitute less than half of the total

Of school graduates in 1992, 1993 and 1994 studies were continued in

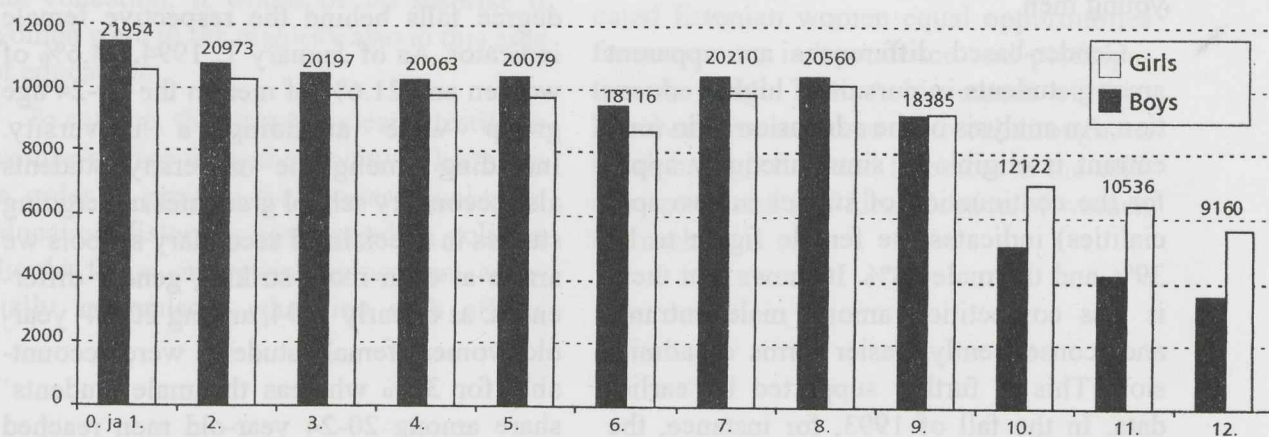
	full-time secondary schools (gymnasiums)		vocational training institutions	
	girls	boys	girls	boys
1992	69.0%	49.4%	18.6%	41.8%
1993	73.8%	56.9%	18.2%	37.5%
1994	76.6%	60.3%	20.8%	38.1%

Source: Ministry of Culture and Education

number of cases. Girls, however, are more numerous among those graduating from secondary schools with a medal for distinction in studies.

Enrolment in vocational training institutions indicates a higher level of education of female entrants. In 1993, 57% of the girls admitted had completed a secondary or vocational school (43% a basic school), the same is true of only 29% of the young men (71% were basic school graduates). Among those admitted in the same year to specialized secondary schools (providing, in the majority of cases, non-university-type of higher education) having complete secondary education were 75% girls and 37% boys. The competition is likewise tougher among female entrants, e.g. in the fall of

Number of students by classes



Source: Ministry of Culture and Education

5. Education

Share of women at different levels of education

	1992		1993		1994	
	Total	No of women	Total	No of women	Total	No of women
Vocational schools (ISCED3)	17 261	7 036	16 671	6 991	16 614	7 155
Specialized secondary (ISCED 5)	12 426	7 179	11 537	6 136	11 192	6 233
Non-university-type higher school and university (ISCED 6)	24 464	22 837	23 214	12 022	23 169	12 141
Master + doctor (ISCED 7)			1 554	654	2 314	1 021

Source: Ministry of Culture and Education

1993, there were 1.58 female and only 1.09 male candidates per opening.

Job-training scholarship schemes provided by different organizations featured great gender-based discrepancies: in 1994, 86% of the total number of scholarships went to young men, irrespective of the fact that female students' performance tends to be better. Among those dropping out in the 1993/94 academic year because of poor performance were 44% female and 55% male students. The category of students with incomplete compulsory education in the vocational training system in the 1992/93 academic year was comprised entirely of young men.

Gender-based differences are apparent among students in pursuit of higher education. An analysis of the admission ratio (one entrant is eligible to simultaneously apply for the continuation of studies in two specialties) indicates the female figure to be 39% and the male 48%. It shows that there is less competition among male entrants and, consequently, easier terms of admission. This is further supported by earlier data. In the fall of 1993, for instance, the female competition amounted to 1.91 can-

didates per vacancy whereas the corresponding male figure was barely 1.58. Even though the male-female proportions of the admitted appear to be fairly balanced the situation nonetheless features a certain preference toward men. In 1994 the enrolment of women stood at 49% and in 1993 at 48%. At a two-third share, men, however, are clearly leaders as university drop-outs.

The data for 1993 demonstrate that only 45% of master's and 38% of doctoral candidates were women. It confirms that in terms of educational achievement male predominance has shifted to areas of higher learning. It is somewhat surprising, though, that female students studying abroad slightly outnumber males. Thus, for example, in 1992/93 the former were responsible for 56% and the latter for 46% of the aggregate number of students pursuing studies in foreign countries.

Women's higher academic performance has given rise to a situation where the proportion of men studying for a university degree falls behind the respective female indicator. As of January 1, 1994, 24.6% of women and 21.6% of men in the 20-24 age group were attending a university. Including among the university students also secondary school graduates undergoing studies in specialized secondary schools we arrive at even more striking gender differences: as of early 1994, among 20-24-year-old women, female students were accountable for 33% whereas the male students' share among 20-24 year-old men reached merely 25.4%. The figures given speak of

women's greater educational endeavours as well as higher level of education.

The teaching staff of schools (except for higher schools) was as of September 1, 1993 comprised chiefly of women (83%); among the principals, the ratio was the opposite: 56% men and 44% women. The teaching staff of general education schools was female-dominated: 87% as opposed to the 13% male figure. The same applies to gymnasium teachers where men are accountable for 16%.

The teaching staff of vocational schools tends to be more proportionately split in terms of sexes: there are 31% men and 69% women. According to common understanding the boys' somewhat disadvantageous position in general schools is caused partly by the predominance of women in the schools' teaching staff.

Today's Estonia could be termed "the society that learns". Available are numerous paid extension programs and courses (in particular, for foreign languages, computer and business training). Developing rapidly are open programs where the benefits will become apparent in the near future.

To ease the situation in the labour market, one has to have access to various professional development and retraining courses. Although no reliable data exists as to the role performed by women in non-state-run education, it would be no surprise if women were in the majority also in this area of education.

To sum up, the statistics clearly testify to women's drive for and capacity of learning. In order to provide for gender equality in education, Estonia's corresponding policies should focus on general education, especially, compulsory education with efforts

targeted at expanding the number of male learners. The female-male gap in academic performance leads to other education-related inequalities. To avoid increasing feminization in the area of education, male students entering vocational schools and universities are given more cordial treatment. This type of reinforcement occurs at the expense of unfair treatment of female students. The new general schools' curriculum which is being drawn up and whose draft versions have become the object of public debate is expected to provide male students better opportunities for progress and achievement already in general schools. Reforms in the vocational training system should be accelerated and attention should be given to the availability of professions for girls.

More proportionate gender-division among the teaching staff is feasible only if improved remuneration schemes are introduced. There is a pressing need for the establishment of information centres allowing easy access to information about non-state-run educational opportunities.

Estonia is heading fast toward an information society and largely changed patterns of employment. What is needed here are prognoses of the impact of these changes on female employment and earnings. We also need a well-designed government policy safeguarding well-(better-than-men-)educated Estonian women equal opportunities for economic independence and participation in public life. Achievement of this, however, presupposes a breakthrough, a breakthrough first and foremost in the self-perception and self-identification of women themselves.

6. Family

The post-war development of the Estonian family has been characterized by several essential features, among them:

- relatively early marriages and the birth of the first child soon afterwards;
- a high, but constantly decreasing marriage rate and a significant number of remarriages;
- a relatively high divorce rate: over the past decades the ratio of divorces to the number of marriages contracted the same year has stabilized at 45-50%;
- a large number of children born out of wedlock: about one-fifth of the new-borns on average with the share climbing over the last years to one-third. According to demographers, this situation is the result of women's high level of education, a high rate of employment and comparatively liberal views.

The highly strained economic situation in the family and the resulting from it mental and physical exhaustion of the spouses have brought about a deterioration of family relations frequently leading to marital dissolution.

The second half of the 1980s witnessed a certain shift in demographic processes. One of the most popular slogans of the pre-independence period urged men and women "to fill the country with children". An increase

in the birth rate was seen as the key guarantor of the preservation of the independent nation. Women started to demand the right to stay at home with children to earnestly perform the role of the homemaker and the wife. The years 1987-1990 had a record number of births and three and four children families.

The impressive growth in the birth rate was followed by a drastic decline. And thus, in 1992, it reached barely 75% of the record level of just a couple of years ago. The downward tendency continued in 1993-94.

Later marriages are a direct consequence of the radically changing economic environment. With the discontinuation of the former Soviet practices of "allocation of flats" and "assignment of jobs" after graduation, the "necessity" to marry lost its urgent nature. A slight rise in the marrying age became evident already in the early 1980s and the drop in the marriage rate serves obviously as the first symptom of the new trend. A decline in the marriage rate occurs concurrently with the increase in cohabitation. Related to this, there is also an indication of rapidly growing numbers of illegitimate children. As for a definitive number of divorces, it has in the past years dropped somewhat.

The higher divorce-marriage ratio over the last years can be attributed to the

reduced numbers of marriages but this does not necessarily mean a greater instability of marital life.

The survey "Estonia'93" conducted by the Estonian Academy of Sciences demonstrated that in the Estonians' hierarchy of values highest are ranked children (by 96% of the respondents) and family (94% of the respondents). The reality, however, disagrees with the results of the survey: out of the working-age population 47% of the men and 44% of the women are in their first marriage and have children. Comparisons of the 1985 and 1993 data reveal a decline in the share of unmarried and an increase in the share of married people (incl both, officially registered marriages as well as cohabiting couples).

As far as the length of the marriage is concerned, the proportion of short-lived marriages (up to 3 years) has dropped while the proportion of long-lived ones (16 years and over) has grown.

The structure of remarriages reveals that of the married women 80% were married for the first, 18% for the second, and 1% for the third time. The respective male figures are 73%, 23% and 2%.

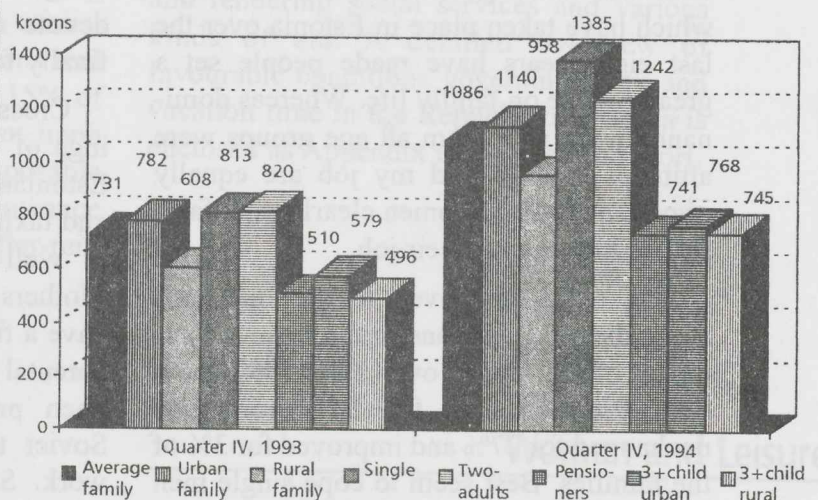
In 1985-1993, two trends are observable in the family situation concerning children: first, the number of childless families has grown and second, the same is true of families with three or more children.

In Estonia, housekeeping and child care are considered predominantly female concerns. The 1993 survey indicated that

out of the total number of families where the woman had full-time employment, in 66% the shopping, in 94% the washing and in 87% the cleaning was done by the woman alone or basically alone. Estonian men's participation in "female" household chores, modest as it has been, has in the past years even decreased.

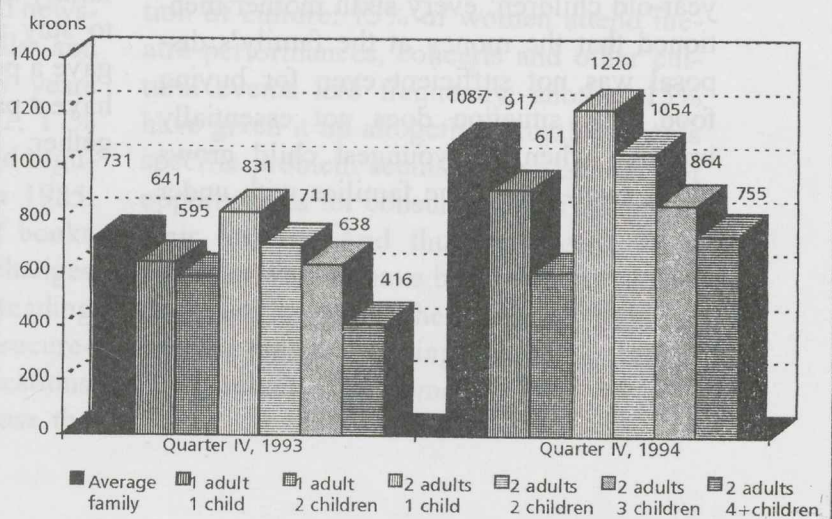
Family matters decided by the spouses together have, over the last eight years,

Monthly income per family member in different types of families



Source: EMOR

Monthly income per family member in families with children



Source: EMOR

become more limited in numbers. The reasons behind it are men's increased workload and a shift from previous slogans declaring men's and women's equality to those supporting the more traditional gender-roles.

The changes and strains have given rise to an increased number of marital conflicts: 66% of the respondents mention conflicts due to the inattentiveness of the spouse, 63% due to the unsatisfactory division of household duties. It all affects women in a negative way: they suffer from a double burden, are exhausted and more dissatisfied with their marriage than men. The changes which have taken place in Estonia over the last eight years have made people set a greater value on family life. Whereas dominant among men from all age groups were attitudes "family and my job are equally important to me", women clearly rank family life higher than their job.

The responses given to the questions about the modifications in the financial situation of the family over 1987-1992 show that it deteriorated for 70%, remained unchanged for 27% and improved for 3% of the families. Best seem to cope single men and, among women, those married and without children or with only one child.

The greatest financial difficulties are experienced by families raising under 3-year-old children: every sixth mother mentioned that the money at the family's disposal was not sufficient even for buying food. The situation does not essentially improve when the youngest child grows older: over half of the families with under

3-year-old children (57%) as well as families with 14-17-year-old teenagers (61%) comment that their income barely enables them to pay rent and provide food.

Similar hardships are faced by single-parent families. 52% of single mothers of Estonian nationality refer mostly (and only) to financial difficulties. Including single mothers with both financial as well as educational problems, we arrive at 81%. The absence of the father as a problem is noted only by 24% of the women and personal problems are pointed out by 9%. If there was enough money, single mothers could devote more time for their children, and finally for her own personal needs.

Cross-cultural comparisons of the findings of sociological research indicate that Estonian women have less time for hobbies and taking care of their health than women in well-established European countries. Mothers and fathers, if at all possible, try to have a full-time job in spite of the fact that parental leave has over the recent years been prolonged and unlike during the Soviet times, there is no compulsion to work. Such behaviour is dictated by the poor level of economic development (low-paid labour, but high prices). In response to the question as to whether they were willing to continue in full-time employment if the family and financial situation enabled them to stay at home only 21% of the women gave a positive answer, the rest preferred to have a part-time job or to stay at home altogether.

Changes in the Estonian economy have created a wide gap between the wealthy and the poor: the income of the rich exceeds that of the poor by approximately 15 times, the respective difference in expenditures is five- or sixfold. In 1994, Estonia introduced a system of social benefits envisaging lower-income families housing and subsistence allowances. The former concerns rent reductions and is applied to about 15% of the families. The latter is contingent upon the size of the family as well as disposable income after paying the rent. The allowance is designated for families with after-rent

disposable income below the subsistence level and is currently received by about 4% of the families.

The Law on Social Security Services which entered into force on the 1st of April, 1995, defines the procedure of allocating and rendering social services and various kinds of aid. A detailed overview of favourable conditions governing work and vacation time in the Republic of Estonia is enclosed as Appendix to the present report.

Woman and Leisure

During work days women have 2-3 hours of leisure time on the average. The amount varies significantly with women's marital status, age and type of employment. It is mostly taken up by TV, radio and newspapers. The number of periodicals and books bought has in the past few years dropped substantially. Thus, in 1992, 17% of women (in 1985, 4%) did not read regularly any newspapers, and 35% (in 1985, 7%) any magazines. The reading of books has become less frequent. Great changes have likewise taken place in the reading matter itself and the channels of procurement for books: high prices of publications have forced people to increasingly use the library.

The reformed economic environment has influenced women's hobbies and outside-of-the-home interests, especially as concerns entertainment and the consumption of culture: 15% of women attend theatre performances, concerts and other cultural events less frequently, another 15% have given it up altogether. Rural women's specific problem seems to be a scarcity of opportunities for consumption of culture in their locality. And thus, in recent years Estonian women have become more home-centered devoting their leisure time to expense-free and coping-oriented activities like gardening and homekeeping.

While Estonian women play a significant part in restoring the values of a civilized society, it is the older and mature women in particular who seem to vitally contribute to the building of a democratic republic. These are the women aged 56 and over who carry the memory of a free Estonia. They lived, studied, worked, or at the very least were born into a democratic country. Their experience of democracy provides them with favourable distinction from their younger counterparts who do not have this experience and whose upbringing and attitudes were influenced by the double

standard of the fifty-year Soviet rule. Today, the centuries-long cooperative traditions have largely been forgotten and their restoration is possible only through collaboration with the older generation. Elderly women are active volunteer workers, they have their own clubs in towns and in the countryside. The "Third Youth Universities" movement has by now gained a firm foothold, the so-called joint- and self-help clubs have spread throughout the country and research into the elderly people entitled "A Hundred-Year-Old Estonian" is underway.

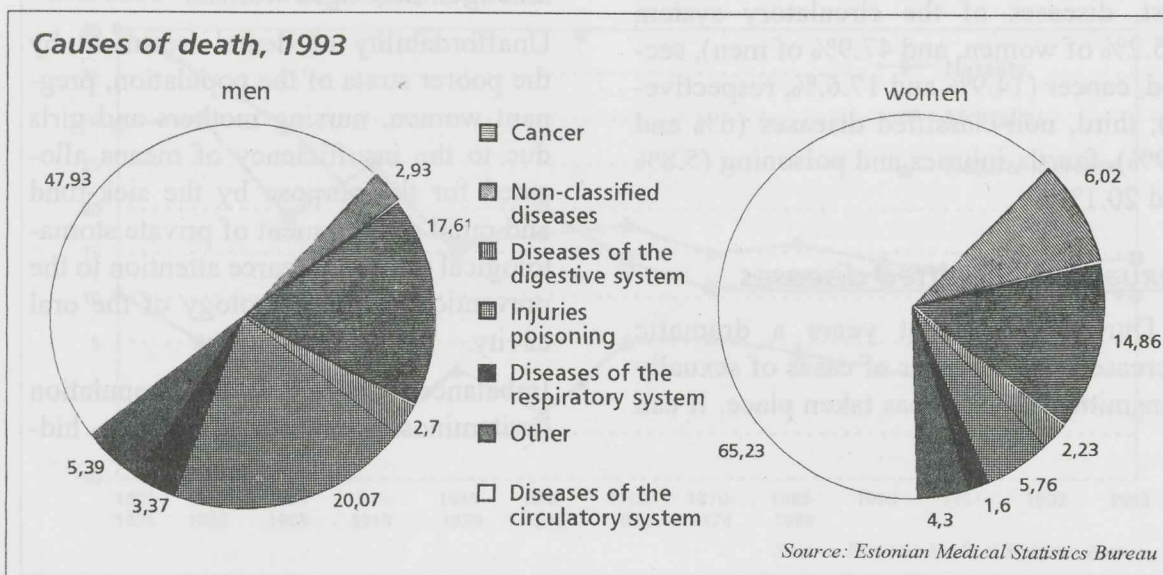
Health and Attitudes toward Health 7.

According to the concept of the World Health Organization (WHO) health rather than the absence of an illness is the state of physical, mental and social well-being. The ultimate goal is not only the prolongation of the average life expectancy, but of the period of good health and active participation in life.

The past decades' surveys conducted by the Estonian Academy of Sciences prove that in the last eight years no significant changes have occurred in the working-age Estonians' satisfaction with their state of health. In 1985, 41% of the respondents were satisfied with their health, in 1993 39%. Women tend to rate their state of

health somewhat lower than men. Least satisfied with their health were over 44-year-old women (in 1985, the share of the satisfied in the age group equalled 15%, in 1993, 25%). Almost every second woman in the over-44 age bracket suffers from a chronic disease. Due to the more arduous nature of agricultural work, chronic diseases tend to be more frequent among rural women. The life of every third woman of Estonian nationality is so strenuous that they mention feeling exhausted and exasperated at least once a week.

The results of the survey demonstrate that Estonian women have in recent years started to take substantially less care of their



health and physical condition. What Estonian women mostly do to keep healthy and fit is to go outdoors in the fresh air (mentioned by 67% of the respondents).

From a positive point of view, however, we can mention a growing interest of young Estonian women in their health. Whereas in 1985, 40% of under 25-year-old Estonian women took great interest in their health, by 1993, the respective indicator had risen to 53%.

Above-the-average health parameters seem to be typical of self-confident people who are convinced that "it is only me that shapes my future" (25%) or those who give full support to the statement "I have traits (properties) I can be proud of" (28%).

Comparative analyses demonstrate the average life expectancy of the Estonian population to be considerably below the level in most European countries. Estonian women live on the average up to 75 years of age, men, by contrast, only up to 61, i.e. 14 years less. It means that a large proportion of elderly women continue their life alone. The male mortality rate exceeds the female one in the up to 70-years age bracket.

The most common causes of death are: first, diseases of the circulatory system (65.2% of women, and 47.9% of men), second, cancer (14.9% and 17.6%, respectively); third, non-classified diseases (6% and 2.9%), fourth, injuries and poisoning (5.8% and 20.1%).

Sexually transmitted diseases

During the recent years a dramatic increase in the number of cases of sexually transmitted diseases has taken place. It can

be illustrated by the number of new cases per 100,000 of population:

	syphilis	gonorr- hoea	chlamy- diosis
1992	11.4	180.7	12.6
1993	22.5	233.1	76.0
1994	56.5	205.0	282.4

Estonia has 39 persons affected by HIV. four of them are women (as of January 1. 1995). All the virus-carriers are guaranteed anonymity and treatment. One of the four women takes an active part in the activities of the "Anti-AIDS" Association.

Health Problems of Estonian Women

- * Inadequate access to medical services for women and children (incl girls) from the poorer strata of the population due to the imposition of a visit fee by the majority of the local governments making the services unaffordable by low-income families.
- * Insufficiency of psychiatric and psychological counselling. Although suicidal tendencies are higher among men, there is a clear rising trend of the suicide rate among middle-aged women.
- * Unaffordability of dental treatment by the poorer strata of the population, pregnant women, nursing mothers and girls due to the insufficiency of means allocated for the purpose by the sick-fund and rapid development of private stomatological services. Scarce attention to the prevention of the pathology of the oral cavity.
- * Imbalanced diet of the whole population (avitaminoses, protein deficiency, hid-

den iron deficiency in preclimacteric and climacteric age, calcium deficiency). Limited-scale hormonal therapy during menopause.

- * Low level of sexual education concerning women, girls as well as boys; unwanted pregnancies, sexual dissatisfaction and sexual neuroses.

- * A sharp increase in sexually transmitted diseases in recent years necessitating the introduction of compulsory medical checks for risk groups.

Family Planning

Estonia has about 367,800 women of fertile age (15-49).

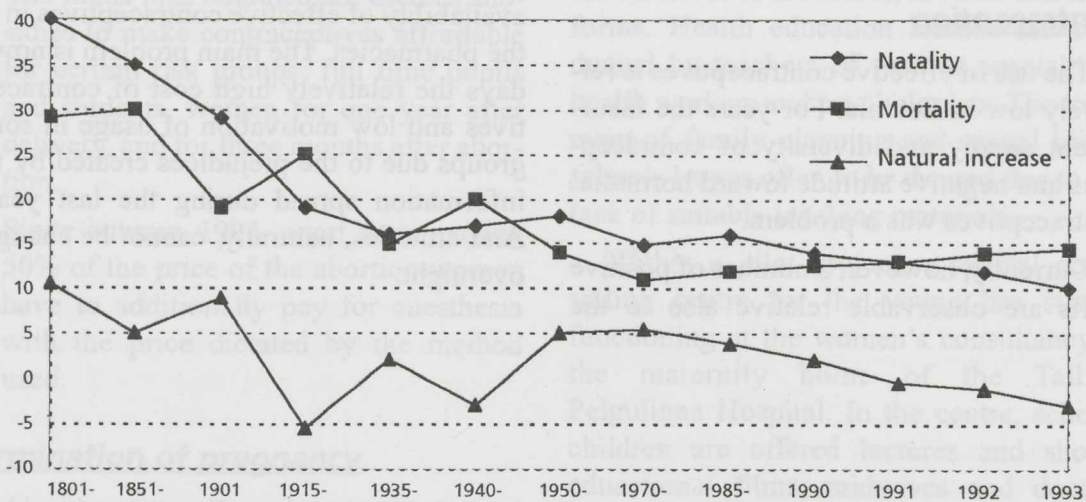
Since 1990 the birth rate has been rapidly decreasing and the natural increase has turned negative (in the year 1993 the birth rate was -4.0 and total fertility rate 1.4).

It is not clear to what extent the recent fertility trends reflect a new pattern of

reproductive behaviour, or whether it might be regarded as a period effect, resulting from the current socio-economic situation.

The result of unwanted pregnancy is often induced abortion as one option to control fertility. Though the number of induced abortions is decreasing from year to year, it still remains high.

The dynamics of natality, mortality and natural increase (per 1,000 of population)

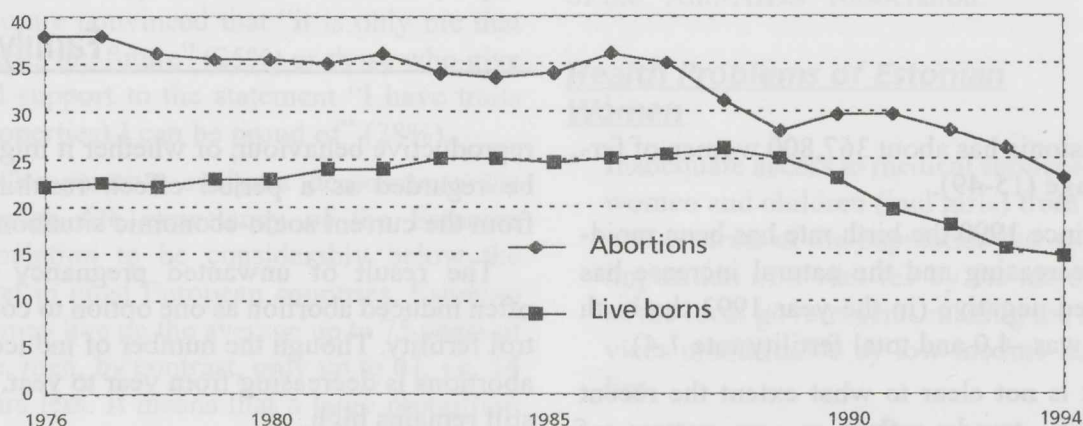


Source: Estonian Medical Statistics Bureau

Abortions and livebirths

	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
total number of abortions	34 928	34 286	29 410	29 406	28 403	25 587	22 450
induced abortions					26 173	23 521	19 784
abortions per 1,000 women (age 15-49)	94.0	90.9	77.0	77.2	75.2	69.6	61.0
induced abortions per 1,000 women (age 15-49)					69.3	63.9	53.8
number of live borns	22 204	23 630	22 308	19 320	17 989	15 170	14 021

Abortions and livebirths



Source: Estonian Medical Statistics Bureau

Contraception

The use of effective contraceptives is relatively low in Estonia. For years the insufficient supply and diversity of contraceptives and negative attitude toward hormonal contraceptives was a problem.

Currently, however, a number of positive shifts are observable relative also to the

availability of effective contraceptives in all the pharmacies. The main problem is nowadays the relatively high cost of contraceptives and low motivation of usage in some groups due to the prejudices created by the information spread during the last years. And attitudes, naturally, cannot be changed overnight.

Legislation concerning termination of pregnancy and contraceptives

- Abortion has been legal in Estonia since the year 1955 (by the Soviet Union abortion law).
- No new Estonian laws have been passed concerning abortions and sterilization.
- Termination of pregnancy has been regulated by the decree passed by the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs stipulating the following criteria:
 - abortion is performed on request up to 12 weeks of pregnancy;
 - abortion is permitted on medical reasons up to 20 weeks of pregnancy;
 - performing of abortions in private health care is subject to regulation.
 - The Estonian Abortion Register was introduced in June 1993. Filling in abortion records is obligatory for all the institutions allowed to perform abortions.
- Since February 1994, abortion is partially paid by women having health insurance (50% of the actual price). Having no health insurance means that the woman has to pay the full cost of the abortion.
- The funds thus obtained are used as subsidies to make contraceptives affordable for certain risk groups: full time pupils and students, women for one year after delivery, and for three months after abortion.
- Since autumn 1994, apart from paying 50% of the price of the abortion women have to additionally pay for anesthesia with the price dictated by the method used.

Termination of pregnancy

Abortions are allowed to be performed by state-owned and other appropriately

licenced medical institutions. Abortions are to be performed by the gynaecologist in hospital, miniabortions can be performed in women's outpatient clinics.

Counselling in family planning

Counselling in family planning has traditionally been carried out by gynaecologists in women's outpatient clinics or family counselling centres.

During the recent years private consultancies have started operation and a number of counselling centres have been established, e.g. in Tallinn, Viljandi and in the immediate future, also in Tartu. As a new trend we can mention greater involvement in counselling of family doctors and midwives.

The Estonian Family Planning Association was established in 1994. The Association seeks to facilitate cooperation between institutions and individuals active in the field of family planning. Its basic aim is to contribute toward good productive health of the population.

Sexual education

In the framework of the health education programme sexual education is included in the curricula of the fourth, seventh and tenth forms. Health education lessons are conducted by teachers of various specialities, health workers and psychologists. The treatment of family planning and sexual life at schools leaves often to be desired due to the lack of suitable teaching materials.

Within a pilot project, a special counselling centre for the young has started functioning at the women's consultancy at the maternity home of the Tallinn Pelgulinna Hospital. In the centre, schoolchildren are offered lectures and shown educational films, midwives and doctors

provide counselling in matters like contraception and sexual life.

Similar counselling centres for young people are in operation in Viljandi, and in Women's Consultancy at the Tallinn Õismäe Hospital. The next one is going to be opened in Tartu.

Problems in the field of family planning

- Family planning has been treated predominantly as a medical not a social problem which it in essence is.
- For policy-makers it has not been a priority issue due to Estonia's negative birth rate; family planning is often interpreted as limitation of births.
- High price of contraceptives and insufficient educational efforts have apparently

made people consider abortion as an acceptable method of family planning.

- Lack of information about different fertility control methods has sometimes lead to the understanding that abortion is less harmful for health than the use of contraceptives.
- The existing health insurance system does not actually encourage prevention of unwanted pregnancies (counselling).
- The quality of counselling leaves to be desired.
- Sexual education programmes for school-children are often not fully implemented.
- Early sexual life necessitates new counselling and education strategies.
- As of today, Estonia lacks extensive research into the use of contraceptives and family planning efforts.

Violence against women is a problem which has not been addressed directly by any of the institutions in the Republic of Estonia. It has even presently not won adequate recognition as a real social problem. The basic problems in a society heading toward a market economy are believed to

concern economic restructuring and avoidance of mass poverty whereby the study of violence against women is not regarded a top priority issue. Furthermore, since the number of abused women is limited, the whole area lacks the urgency to become a topical issue.

Measures to Prevent Violence against Women

Legal framework

According to the Estonian Constitution no one is allowed to be tortured, treated or punished in a cruel or dehumanizing way.

The Estonian legislation contains a number of clauses envisaging punishment for the use of violence. Two articles in the Criminal Code address violence against women directly: rape (§ 115) and sexual intercourse with an under 16-year-old female (§ 116). In case of rape, court action is initiated only upon the respective application by the victim (in case of infants, by the victim's parent).

To better safeguard the protection of women (in particular, underaged females) it would be necessary to allow the initiation of

court action also upon the application by a third party (e.g. a guardian, the corresponding institution, police). Some of the criminals remain unprosecuted because of the victim's inability to formulate an application or because of the fear of the criminal. The problem is especially evident in case of the rape in the family by the spouse or the rape of children by the mother's partner. A further elaboration of the clauses of the Criminal Code dealing with sexual exploitation and abuse is necessary. The submittal of the respective amendments is currently in progress.

In family relations the wife and the husband are given equal treatment which is stipulated in the Estonian Constitution as well as the Law on Family.

.8 *Violence against Women*

The victims of violence are rendered assistance by welfare institutions. In 1994, the Estonian Government submitted to the State Assembly (Parliament) a Welfare Work Bill which legitimizes social services, benefits and other types of aid.

National plans of action and special training programmes

National plans of action as well as special training programmes are currently non-existent. Despite this, several institutions have taken concrete steps to investigate and prevent violence against women.

From 1992 onwards there have been a number of voluntary initiatives aimed at studying the spread of child abuse. The survey of two hundred 14-16-year-old students in Tartu revealed that 76 per cent of the girls had been punished at home, 65 per cent had experienced violence at school and 38 per cent of the girls required outside help. The Ministry of Social Affairs has channelled some foreign financial aid into the establishment of a confidential telephone and family counselling services, and the network of shelters for the abused.

Protection of Abused women

The number of rapes registered by the Ministry of Internal Affairs has grown significantly (from 65 to 104 cases per year) from 1980 to 1993. However, owing to the general dynamic increase in crime the share of rapes has, on the contrary, dropped (the number of crimes recorded in 1980 equalled 1,112; in 1993, 37,163).

The number of crimes registered as intercourse with an under 16-year-old female is insignificant since such an act is rarely considered criminal, it is rather treated as sexu-

In July 1994 the Ministry of Internal Affairs started to compile a data bank of the victims of crimes. By the beginning of 1996, the statistics of the criminal acts registered in 1995 will be available enabling detailed statistical analyses also relative to female victims.

The Ministry of Social Affairs has scheduled for 1995 the commencement of a state-funded programme studying family violence.

Estonia could benefit greatly from a special in-depth study of women having fallen victims to criminal acts. It could focus on the typology of victims, the motives, time and place of the commitment of the crime. The results of the research could form the basis for designing specific steps to combat violence against women.

Estonia lacks experts with the qualifications necessary to address violence. Our present problems concern the diagnostics and definition of violence along with the rehabilitation of victims. These sectors could be developed in cooperation with foreign experts.

Legal framework

According to the Estonian Constitution no one is allowed to be tortured, treated or punished in a cruel or degrading way.

The Estonian legislation contains a number of provisions which protect the victim's right to privacy and to confidentiality.

al intercourse by mutual consent whereby the majority of the actions brought against the perpetrator are based on the information obtained from maternity hospitals.

An overview of the rapes and attempted rapes registered by the Ministry of Internal Affairs is given in the following table.

Abused women are provided help by family counselling and confidential telephone services. Family counselling services which were first introduced in 1980 and are now in operation in seven out of Estonia's

Rapes and sexual intercourse with under 16-year-old females

	§ 115		§ 116	
	Number of cases	% from the total number of crimes registered the same year	Number of cases	% from the total number of crimes registered the same year
1980	65	0.6	no recorded data	
1985	58	0.4	10	0.07
1993	104	0.3	1	0.003

fifteen counties are open to all those seeking help.

Since 1991 ten children's shelters have been established which do not refuse help also to women subjected to violence. The year 1994 saw the institution of the first mother-and-child shelter offering accommodation and protection to pregnant women and women with small children in situations where the family crisis has made living at home impossible. The same year marks the establishment by the Centre for

Social Rehabilitation of the Christian Society of the so-called Victims' House at Sangaste providing rehabilitation possibilities to abused women. Such institutions offer emergency protection and help in settling social problems.

Confidential telephone and counselling services, and emergency shelters which are meant to provide immediate relief are accessible to all seekers of help. Longer-term assistance schedules, however, presuppose involvement of local authorities.

Women in the Judiciary

There are currently 107 female and 79 male judges in the Republic of Estonia (i.e. 58% women and 42% men). The female-male ratio cannot be attributed to a higher evaluation of women, but to the relatively low salaries which by now have been substantially raised.

Of the public prosecutors 81 or 59 per cent are women. This impressive share of

women has again its roots in the modest salaries received by civil servants.

Out of the total 236 lawyers, 74 or 31.4 per cent are women.

Women are accountable for less than 20 per cent of police officials, and constitute about half of the number of police investigators.

9. Women and the Media

The Image of Women Created by the Media

Today Estonian women have the choice of several specialized magazines to meet the needs of quite narrowly defined target groups, e.g. fashion, home improvement and family magazines. Of the periodicals published uninterrupted since the pre-war period "Eesti Naine" ("The Estonian Woman") has established itself as a traditional, upright and reputable magazine. Since the Estonian female readership is so mixed and heterogeneous further market niches for a number of new women-focused magazines are certain to occur.

The press often features articles about and for women, some of the newspapers contain pages designed specifically for the woman reader. State television as well as private channels offer special programmes for women.

Besides mirroring reality, television establishes models and examples and shapes public opinion and beliefs. What frequently happens, however, is that the media does not present women the way they actually are, but advertises the dreams of wishful thinking as suggested either by women themselves, politicians, or the world of business.

In the late 1980s, the Estonian press dealt extensively with the hot topic of the day - women should stay at home. The high value set anew on home, family and motherhood was to counterbalance the ideals propagated by the Soviet press according to which a woman could be entirely happy only when driving a tractor or conquering space.

A few of years ago the press was enraptured by beauty pageants. Articles in the "Women and Society" section contained mostly detailed overviews of all kinds of beauty contests. Quite a few articles spoke about prostitutes some of which left the reader with the impression that the "profession" as such was quite prestigious. Much attention was given to such eternally feminine careers as that of a fashion model or an actress. Not much, however, was said about ordinary women doing their work conscientiously and at a high professional level.

The period of idealizing housewives and planting into women unrealistic dreams seems to be approaching its end. Not a small part in it have played editors and their efforts to more realistically depict women's lives in Estonia.

Estonia has a large number of women journalists. Thus, it would be unfair to maintain that journalism is an exclusively male area. This, however, is true of a number of countries with fairly high levels of women's emancipation.

Recently emerged private TV, radio and periodicals, however, do employ mostly men since privately run media presupposes the journalists' full commitment to their work. Estonian women whose priority has by tradition been care of the home and the children are unwilling or unable to work unlimited hours which the job of a journalist definitely requires. High and highly differentiated salaries in the private media make the career particularly attractive to men. The employer is overcautious when hiring young women. First, because of the prospect of their imminent motherhood and second, because women with small children have the right to refuse job-related missions which, however, might be unacceptable for the employer. In Estonia, there are practically no journalists' unions and the salary conditions are a secret agreement between the employer and the employee.

The yet developing investigative reporting seems to remain an exclusively male domain: first, it requires greater commitment than the work of a typical editor or reporter and second, it deals with topics of greater interest for men than women like the economy or the backstage of political decision-making. Furthermore, men have easier access to the sources of information since the areas mentioned tend to remain in the realm of men's influence. Such fields of activity as culture and social welfare which involve neither great monies nor power are in the Estonian media reserved chiefly for women. Not a single Estonian major daily has a woman editor-in-chief, they are in the minority in lowest supervisory positions. Private media channels are nearly a 100-percent men-controlled. It is no wonder, therefore, that it is men that mostly create the image of the Estonian media. The male-female proportions of students undergoing journalistic studies are, however, almost equal.

10. Women's Movement in Estonia

The beginning of the Estonian women's movement coincides with the national awakening. In the 1880s, prompted by a nationwide movement to build the first Estonian-language school, Aleksandrikool, the first voluntary women's organization was established to help in this endeavor.

The Women's Society established in Tartu in 1907 already spoke openly of women's rights in terms of equal salary for equal work. The Estonian Women Students Society was established by the women university students in 1911.

In 1917, on the initiative of the Tartu Women's Society the first women's congress convened. The main theme focused on women's rights.

In 1918, the War for Independence helped unite men and women in a common cause. In the same year when Estonia became an independent republic a legislative bill proposing equal opportunity for both men and women was introduced.

Social changes in the 1920s brought about a great turning point in women's lives. The women's movement gained impetus quickly. On the initiative of women delegates of the Constituent Assembly the second women's congress was held in 1920 wherein the Association of Estonian Women's Organizations was established (renamed the Estonian Women's League in

1930). The objective was join forces in working co-operatively to promote and ensure women's legal, economic and educational rights and cultural endeavors. The Young Christian Women's Society, the Estonian Women's Temperance Society, the Women's Home Defence League, the Academic Women's League and the Rural Women's Central Society offered women activities via local chapters. The major achievement of the women's movement was the establishment of the Chamber of Domestic Economy in 1936 which also functioned as the vocational organization of homemakers investigating legislative bills and proposals dealing with the economics of the home.

The popular magazines "Eesti Naine" ("The Estonian Woman", 1924), "Taluperenaine" ("The Farm Homemaker", 1927) and "Maret" (1935) helped women in broadening their horizons.

The activities of the women's organizations brought about changes in the family and social service laws, improvements in the situation of the single mother and her child, changes in the woman's position in society and an increase of her political rights. Nevertheless, the legislative institutions remained largely under the control of men.

The 1940 Soviet occupation ended Estonian independence and all the activities of the women's organizations. The women's movement during the Soviet period was very controversial. On the surface it appeared as if women had equal rights. Forced "emancipation" justified women having to work in all occupations. However, even within the confines of highly formal and centrally controlled activities women could demonstrate some initiative.

Efforts were made to emphasize the importance of the family, to develop handicrafts and the homemaker's skills and to underscore the health of the mother and her child.

The late 1980s witnessed a resurgence of wide-spread social changes. The Fifth Soviet Women's Congress in 1989 symbolized the end of the era of forced "emancipation". In the same year, the Estonian Women's League was re-established in Tartu and soon afterwards other pre-war influential organizations. The movement for independence served as an ideal environment for the surge of social activity leading to the establishment of numerous women's organizations, mainly local women's societies.

Currently, there are almost 100 women's and family organizations in Estonia. Dominant are small local women's societies and clubs. These organizations could become a pressure group helping to settle certain issues. As yet, however, people are taken by surprise at hearing the number of existing women's organizations since not much has been heard of their activities, nor have they come out with any tangible results. For the most part, women's organizations propagate women's traditional roles and their responsibilities in the family and the society. Women's problems concerning equal rights have received little attention. One-third of Estonia's women's and family organizations function in two major cities,

in the capital city Tallinn and in the university town Tartu. The situation reflects a more general tendency, i.e. the concentration of cultural and social activity in larger urban settlements. The situation varies with counties with the number of organizations ranging from some ten to one or two. This seems to reflect the counties' degree of viability. Active creation of organizations is occurring in developing industrial and agricultural regions of Central and Northern Estonia. Southern and Western Estonia are lagging behind with the only exception being Pärnu City and County. This is thanks to their openness and entrepreneurial spirit.

Estonian women's organizations have membership ranging from ten to a couple of hundred. The biggest nationwide organizations are the Women's League, the Estonian Association of Business and Professional Women, the Academic Women's League, and the Women's Home Defence League. More specialized are the women students' organizations with a dozen or so active members, but with past memberships of some hundred. Characteristic of these organizations is their frequently programmatic inward orientation which qualifies them for the so-called closed organizations. These organizations neither seek public recognition nor pretend to have any major influence on public affairs doing it rather via educating their members.

Operating quite successfully in several Estonian towns are charitable organizations of international renown like Zonta, Soroptimists, Inner Wheel and Ladies Circle.

Estonian women's organizations pursue a variety of activities. The most popular are self-improvement courses on a assortment of topics ranging from upgrading one's practical skills to enhancing one's knowledge in social sciences or culture. Another important area is charity. Help is provided to orphanages, hospitals and homes for the

10. Women's Movement in Estonia

elderly, for the purpose various charitable events are organized. The focus of attention in the 1990s has been on problems concerning the family, children and just learning how to cope in general. In this context we have to specifically mention various handicraft courses. Increased emphasis is set on the problems of health.

Cooperation between different women's organizations is improving. On several occasions the Estonian Women's League has mobilized other organizations for a worthwhile course like the campaign for alternative military service. The Estonian Women's League contributed largely to the Estonian women's participation in the Nordic Countries' Forum in Turku in August 1994.

The idea initiated by the Estonian Association of Business and Professional Women to vote for a Woman of the Year has aroused great interest. In 1993 the honourable title went to Daisy Järva, chairwoman of the Union of Estonian Tourist Agents and in 1994 to Heidi-Ingrid Maaroos, Professor of Medicine at Tartu University.

Media interest in the activities of women's organizations is growing. The role of women as well as women's organizations in the Estonian society has become more pronounced and appreciated.

Strategic Goals for Resolving Women's Issues 11.

1. To implement the "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women" which Estonia joined in 1991.
2. To seek the establishment of governmental structures and dissemination of information about human rights of women and men.
3. To raise women's competitive level, to ensure their position in the labour market and public life. To monitor the application of equal salary condition stipulated by the law.
4. To seek governmental support for women's advanced training and retraining programmes.
5. To improve the social security system for families with dependents providing mothers of underaged children with opportunities to use flexible work schedules. To improve the situation of single parents.
6. To improve the collection of social statistics about women to more precisely describe different social groups. To support gender-studies.
7. To support and attach relevance to family planning and distribution of duties in the family.
8. To establish at the Ministry of Social Affairs a special department to improve the treatment of women's and family planning issues and to better direct and coordinate the respective efforts.
9. To highlight with the involvement of the media equality issues, to emphasize the value of women's public, political and professional activity.
10. To encourage cooperation between non-governmental women's organizations and Estonian women's organizations as well as cooperation with international women's organizations. To find appropriate formulae for collaboration between the government and women's organizations. To pursue the tradition of women's congresses in the Republic of Estonia.

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Appendix: Favourable Conditions Governing Work and Vacations in the Republic of Estonia

The basic part of women-focused preferential terms stipulated in a number of legal acts and decrees relate to pregnancy and child care (as of January 1, 1995):

1. Child care benefits (derived from health insurance tax and the state budget).

1.1. Pregnancy and child-birth leave - 126 calendar days in total, incl 70 days preceeding and 56 days (in case of multiple births or complications, 70 days) following childbirth. The compensation is equal to 100 per cent of the mother's average salary over the last two months of employment. The adopter of an up to one-year-old child is entitled to a 70-calendar-day leave.

1.2. Parent's cash benefit due to child-birth in the amount of 12 monthly child benefit payments (1,260 kroons). The flat-rate monthly child benefit is equal to 105 kroons.

1.3. Benefits for each child up to 16 years of age (in case of studies in a basic school, gymnasium or vocational training institution, up to 19 years of age) - 1 monthly benefit (105 kroons). Supplementary benefits are payable to families raising two or more benefit-covered children with supplementary payments equal to 35 kroons per month per

second and 85 kroons per month per third, etc. child.

1.4. School support. A one-time payment at the beginning of the school year equivalent to one child benefit per full-time pupil or child-benefit-covered pupil enrolled due to medical reasons in an alternative type of schooling.

1.5. Child care leave for taking care of a child up to 3 years of age. Over the first 1.5 years the non-working parent on parental leave or a parent undergoing full-time studies in a vocational school or university is entitled to an allowance of two child benefits (210 kroons); in case of a 1.5-3-year-old child - of one child benefit (105 kroons) a month. A non-employed parent taking care of a disabled child between 1.5 and 18 years of age or of a person disabled since childhood, is entitled to a monthly allowance of two child benefits.

In addition to the above, families with four or more children are eligible to receive the following supplementary allowances:

- a parent on parental leave with a child up to 3 years of age or a non-working parent raising children -

90 kroons per month per each child between 1.5 and 3 years of age;

- a non-working parent raising at home 3-16-year-old children or children up to 19 years of age in case of their studies in a basic school, gymnasium or vocational school - 180 kroons per family up to the completion of the first form by the youngest child.

1.6. Single-parent benefit. The benefit is designated for a single, divorced or widowed I, II or III group invalid parent and is payable in the amount of 1.5 child benefits (157.5 kroons) per month; for a mother raising the child alone in cases when the father's name has been recorded in the child's birth certificate as indicated by the mother, also when the other parent has, by law, been declared wanted - 0.6 child benefits (63 kroons per month).

1.7. Benefits for children with fathers doing military service - 1 child benefit per month during the period of military service.

1.8. Benefits for a child under guardianship up to 16 years of age (up to 19 years of age in case of full-time studies in a basic school, gymnasium or vocational school, or enrolled for medical reasons in an alternative type of schooling) - two child benefits per month (210 kroons).

1.9. A living allowance to an orphan or a child deprived of parental care who has been living in an orphanage or special school for the handicapped for at least three of the last years - 3,000 kroons. In the event the child has spent less than three years in the

institution referred to the living allowance is deductible by one child benefit rate per each missing month.

2. Favourable conditions governing vacations

2.1. Supplementary paid child care leave - in case of raising one or two children under 14 years of age, the mother or the father is, upon their request, granted a supplementary 3-calendar-day leave annually; in case of three or more children as well as a child under 3 years of age - 6 calendar days (financed from the state budget's social insurance reserve). The supplementary leave is also reserved for the guardian raising a parentless child.

2.2. Employers are obliged to provide mothers of children up to 14 years of age, if requested so by them, up to a 14-calendar-day unpaid leave.

2.3. Employers are obliged to grant mothers of children up to 3 years of age, upon their request and at a time convenient for them, a leave of absence before and after the maternity and child-care leave; this also applies to the husband during the wife's maternity leave.

2.4. One parent of a disabled child has the right to a one-day additional paid leave per month.

3. Health insurance

Insured by the mandatory health insurance are apart from the insured also members of his/her family on his/her maintenance (living together with him/her incomeless spouse, children, parents and grandparents as well as children - full-time pupils outside the service area of the given sick-fund). The latter will be recorded and

entered in the register of the residence-based sick-fund according to the list presented by the employer of the insured.

Persons held equal with the insured by the mandatory health insurance include:

- children up to 18 years of age and full time pupils and students in case neither the parents nor the guardian have been insured by the mandatory health insurance;
- a person raising a child up to 3 years of age, the parent raising a disabled child up to 18 years of age, a guardian as well as a pregnant woman uninsured by the husband;
- pensioners;
- persons certified officially as unemployed.

Health insurance funds are used to pay the expenses of medical examinations and treatment as well as compensation on the basis of a medical certificate of disability (sick list) for the insured. In case of family members on the maintenance of the insured and persons equalized with the insured only the cost of medical examinations and treatment will be compensated by the health insurance fund.

The insured are paid compensation on the basis of a medical certificate of disability (sick list):

- 3.1. In case of caring for an up to 14-year-old child up to 14 calendar days - 100% of the salary;
- 3.2. In case of caring for an up to 3-year-old child (up to 16-year-old disabled child) while the mother is ill, up to 14 calendar days - 80% of the salary.

4. Favourable conditions governing work

- 4.1. An expectant mother as well as a mother raising an up to 3-year-old child has the right to ask for a job

transfer whereby the difference in pay is compensated for from the health insurance fund. Should an expectant mother's transfer opportunities to a less burdensome, non-detrimental-to-health job be absent, she is freed from work with the corresponding compensation charged to the health insurance fund.

- 4.2. An expectant mother and a woman raising a disabled child or a child up to 3 years of age can be sent on a job-related mission only upon her consent.

- 4.3. An expectant mother is not permitted to work overtime or do night-time work. A woman raising a disabled or an up to 14-year-old child or taking care of a group I invalid can be made to do overtime or night-time work only upon her consent.

- 4.4. An employer is obliged to provide part-time work to an expectant mother or a woman rearing a disabled child or a child up to 14 years of age upon her request.

- 4.5. A person raising an up to 1.5-year-old child is entitled to supplementary breaks to feed the child. The breaks must be no less than thirty minutes and are to occur at three hour intervals. In case of two or more children under 1.5 years of age the duration of the break can be no less than one hour. Should the person express the wish, the breaks may be added to the lunch break or deducted by the respective amount of time from the length of the work day. The child nutrition breaks are included in the working time and are compensated for according to the mean salary.

- 4.6. A woman raising a child up to 3 years of age is eligible to terminate her employment contract on a 5-day

notice (the required period of advance notice otherwise being 1 month).

- 4.7. An employer is not permitted to terminate an employment contract with an expectant mother or a woman raising an up to 3-year-old child except in the following cases: liquidation or bankruptcy of the enterprise, non-performance of work-related assignments by the employee or employment of a full-time employee to fill the position.
- 4.8. In declaring a person unemployed raising an up to 7-year-old child or a disabled child by mother; in case of the absence of the mother, by the father or by a guardian; is held equal to gainful employment.
- 4.9. An expectant mother with less than 70 days until delivery as determined by a doctor, does not qualify for registration as unemployed. Subsequent to receiving the general 180-day unemployment benefit the respective right is maintained by the unemployed:
 - with less than 180 calendar days till retirement age -until reaching retirement age;
 - with less than 70 days till delivery as determined by a doctor - until delivery;
 - with three or more under 18-year-old children in the family for 90 days.
- 4.10. Approved have been: first, the list of jobs considered especially difficult and detrimental to health where employment of women is not permitted, and second, the list of jobs pertaining to sanitary and support services performed underground

where employment of women is permissible.

5. Favourable conditions governing pensions

- 5.1. Up until January 1, 1994 eligible for old age pension were 55-year-old women and 60-year-old men whose pensionable length of service equalled at least 15 years.

From January 1, 1994 on, the pensionable age for men as well as women was increased by 6 months each subsequent year (thus, in 1995 women attain pensionable age at 56 and men at 61) whereby in 2003 women are entitled to old-age pension at the age of 60 and men at the age of 65.

- 5.2. Included in the pensionable length of service is the period of taking care of a group I invalid, a disabled child or a child up to the age of 3.
- 5.3. Added to the pensionable length of service to one of the parents are two additional years of service per child.
- 5.4. Women who have raised a disabled child or 5 or more children to at least 8 years of age are entitled to a superannuation pension 5 years prior to the attainment of the officially determined pensionable age provided that their pensionable length of service is at least 10 years. In case the woman has died or waived her rights to the benefit of the husband, the husband is eligible for the same preferential treatment (old-age pension (allowance) on favourable terms).

Since January 1, 1995, changes have been introduced in the funding of the payments relative to child benefits, compensation for additional days of maternity leave, an additional day of leave to one of the par-

ents of a disabled child and breaks for child nutrition.

All child benefits are applied for and determined by the Pension Offices and are payable by post or transferable to a bank account of the recipient of the payment.

The compensation for additional days of maternity leave, an additional day of leave for the parent of a disabled child and for child nutrition breaks paid formerly by the

employer from the social tax, are since January 1, 1995 paid from the state budget. As before, the exact sums are calculated and paid out by the employer which means that the changes rather than affecting the employee directly, relate to the employer who is compensated for the payments effected by Pension Offices.

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