

ANED country report on equality of educational and training opportunities for young disabled people

Country: Estonia

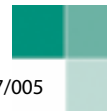
Author(s): Meeli Murasov, Tiia Kurvits, Luule Sakkeus

The information contained in this report was compiled by the Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED) in May 2010.

The [Academic Network of European Disability experts](#) (ANED) was established by the European Commission in 2008 to provide scientific support and advice for its disability policy Unit. In particular, the activities of the Network will support the future development of the EU Disability Action Plan and practical implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

This country report has been prepared as input for the Thematic report on the implementation of EU Equality of educational and training opportunities in European countries with reference to equality for young disabled people.

The purpose of the report ([Terms of Reference](#)) is to review national implementation on equality of educational and training opportunities for young people, and in particular the National Strategic Reports of member states from a disability equality perspective in education and training, and provide the Commission with useful evidence in supporting disability policy mainstreaming.



Section 1: Executive summary and conclusions

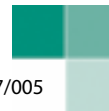
In general terms, the Ministry of Education and Research¹ has targeted the organisation of educational system for students with special needs at all levels, on the basis of equal opportunity to secure quality education for all. The need for adjustments to organisation, curriculum and environments are recognised, and the approach emphasises co-operation between different stakeholders (the state, local government, schools, training providers and parents). The recent reform focus is towards more individualised curricula and an attempt to move from medical to more educational paradigms. Policy priorities also include the modernisation of teacher training and de-centralised management to schools. The OECD review on tertiary education in Estonia in 2007² brought out the need to enhance the equity in the system in four main areas, among them also for disabled people. The new strategy with the help of European Structural Fund programme 'Primus' and infrastructure programmes is focusing more to enhancing the access to buildings, securing support services and enlarging the scope of benefits for disabled persons.

However, the data of Ministry of Education and Research reveal that at vocational education 2,7% of students are with special needs and at the level of higher education students with special needs form only 0,1% among the young adults. The recent Survey on Disabled Persons and the Nursing Burden of their Family Members (2009)³ identified among disabled persons aged 16-29 5% with higher education, 12% with vocational education and 23% with secondary (specialised) education, although it can be assumed that part of them had acquired the level of education before impairment. Nevertheless, during the survey, third of the disabled persons were still studying and one third were expressing their wish to continue their studies. The main restrictions as expressed by the disabled persons on the way of further studies were their health conditions and economic reasons. Among other obstacles also access to information, access to buildings, no suitable curricula, no possibilities to access internet were identified. Relying on this outcome and based on the conclusions by OECD, the new strategies in educational system are responding to these needs.

¹ <http://www.hm.ee/index.php?149405>

² Huisman J, Santaigo P, Högselis P., Lemaitre M.J., Thorn, W. (2007). OECD Reviews of tertiary education- Estonia. OECD, Paris.

³ http://www.sm.ee/fileadmin/meedia/Dokumendid/Sotsiaalvaldkond/kogumik/PIU2009_loppraport.pdf



Section 2: Legal and policy context

In addition to the following items, an overview of the legal context for special needs education is also provided in the European Agency country report for Estonia

Under the Education Act⁴ the government and local government have to ensure possibilities to attend the school and opportunities for continuing education. The educational system in Estonia is organised in a way that one can easily access after graduating one level of education the next level of education. It also applies to young people with disability. The right to education for all is established in the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia (§37)⁵ and basic schooling is compulsory (although parents have the final choice in the type of education).

According to the Education Act (§6.5), the Ministry of Education and Research has to 'direct and organise the preparation of study plans, study modules for public educational institutions (except universities) and study materials for students with special needs and establish the requirements for educational literature in order to ensure conformity to the national curriculum'.

Local governments (§10.1) have to 'provide persons with physical disabilities, speech impairments or sensory or learning disabilities and persons who need special support with the opportunity to study at a school of their residence. If suitable conditions are not found, the state and local governments shall provide such persons, pursuant to the procedure and under the conditions prescribed by legislation, with the opportunity to study at an educational institution established for that purpose'.

This means that every child has the right to be educated at a local mainstream school unless it is judged that the conditions for their schooling cannot be met, in which case they may be admitted to a special school. In rural municipalities, this may mean that the nearest special school is in another area. As noted above, the legal position is that parents exercise the final decision. The same law dictates: 'The type of educational institution and the form of study shall be determined for or recommended to children with special needs on the basis of medical, psychological and pedagogical assessments' (§10.3). These responsibilities are further outlined in the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act⁶ (§4). Local authorities have to keep records of disabled persons and organise teaching for them.

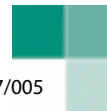
According to the Social Welfare Act⁷ the Ministry of Social Affairs has to organise administration of 'state vocational training institutions' for disabled people (§6).

⁴<http://www.legaltext.ee/et/andmebaas/tekst.asp?loc=text&dok=X70039K3&keel=en&pg=1&ptyyp=R&tyyp=X&query=haridusseadus>

⁵ <http://www.president.ee/en/estonia/constitution.php>

⁶ <http://www.riigiteataja.ee/ert/act.jsp%3Fid%3D784125>

⁷<http://www.legaltext.ee/et/andmebaas/tekst.asp?loc=text&dok=X1043K10&keel=en&pg=1&ptyyp=R&tyyp=X&query=sotsiaalhoolekande>



The state also makes grants for rehabilitation services and training in educational establishments for persons, mentioned in Social Benefits for Disabled Persons Act. The Social Insurance Board⁸ is involved in provision of the rehabilitation plan for disabled. The Social Welfare Act (§18) also provides for the possibility of ‘residential educational institutions’ for disabled children of school age.

Since 2006, decree No.25 of the Minister of Education and Research⁹ regulates the conditions for studies in vocational training system for people with special needs. Students with special needs are defined more widely than disabled persons, i.e. the definition embraces also gifted students, students with behavioural disorders, students who have disrupted their studies for a long time as well as those with disability or health problems. The decree enables special needs to be taken into account in reorganisation of an individual curriculum or accessible environment (e.g. to make essential facilities accessible to wheelchair users, deaf or blind students, §2). The training should also be organised according to the need for additional staff (e.g. support staff, personal assistants, sign language interpreters, etc., §3). In general terms, students with special needs should not be taught in separate groups unless necessary and beneficial (and in a group of not more than 12, §6). Vocational educational establishments have to enable the conditions for vocational education, in collaboration with government, local government or the owner (taking into account according to possibilities the wishes of the students and the specificities of opportunities to find work in the labour market, §2). In order to better organise vocational training, the conditions are agreed with different counterparts. In case of need, the training can also be provided outside the premises of the educational establishment. Vocational institutions also provide different curricula, which seek to enable people with disabilities cope with their everyday life in the future¹⁰

For a student who, according to Social Welfare Act, has an individual rehabilitation plan, the recommendations in the plan are taken into account in organising their better rehabilitation in terms of education or training.

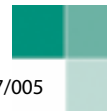
The schools can refer to additional personnel and their targeted training can be organised. At least once a year students are interviewed for their development plans. Students with special needs have an individual curriculum and the practice places are organised taking into account their needs. Usually the students are learning individually, sometimes special groups (in case of multiple persons with similar needs) might be established, if the education can be performed better.

To enable support services the state provides additional support for vocational training of those with special needs.

⁸ <http://www.ensib.ee>

⁹ <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/ert/act.jsp?id=13173724>

¹⁰ E.g. simplified curricula (<http://www.riigiteataja.ee/ert/act.jsp?id=792367>) , ‘coping’ curricula are provided (<https://www.riigiteataja.ee/ert/act.jsp?id=790670>)



The development plan for the Estonian Vocational Education and Training System for 2009-2013¹¹ foresaw that state-commissioned places would be financed with a coefficient 1.5. The relevant decree No.42 of the Minister of Education and Research¹² has established this in legal form.

The Estonian Adult Education Development Plan for 2009-2013¹³ (a continuation of the Lifelong Learning Strategy 2005-2008) foresees that quality of education and relevant possibilities have to be granted to everybody, irrespective of their age, ethnicity, place of residence, socio-economic background, health or special educational needs. Mainly, adult education is granted through the vocational training system, which among others specifies among its objectives increasing flexibility of both formal and adult education, using different forms and means of training (evening classes, weekend classes, cyclical learning, eLearning and bLearning (*blended learning* – combined use of traditional and eLearning methods)). One of the target groups is foreseen as learners with special needs and other target groups whose participation in everyday learning is complicated, in order to enhance their learning opportunities.

The Estonian Higher Education Strategy 2006-2015 aims to make higher education more accessible and to include non-traditional learners in the higher education system, including measures which will enable the combination of studies, work and family life, and the taking into account of previous studies and work experience, as a significant part of completing the study programme. The strategy foresees for lifelong learning a goal to ensure access by 12.5% of the 25-64-year old population to in-service training and retraining, and to adult formal education (also including vocational education).

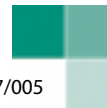
The above-mentioned strategy also foresees growth in access to higher education for students with special needs. For that purpose additional resources for stipends and benefits, but also enhancing the support for needed services (help for students with mobility impairments, digitalisation and audiovisualisation of study materials, training of the leading dog etc.) have been secured through ESF Primus programme for the period 2008-2013 under the activity 'Support for students' coping'¹⁴. The strategy mentions that the main support so far has been to persons with hearing problems, the strategy foresees also enhancing supporting facilities for students with mobility restrictions, visual impairments and other impairments.

¹¹ <http://www.hm.ee/index.php?popup=download&id=9829>

¹² <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/ert/act.jsp?id=13270267>

¹³ <http://www.hm.ee/index.php?popup=download&id=10228>
<http://www.hm.ee/index.php?popup=download&id=9945>

¹⁴ Decree No.270 of the Minister of Education and Research (April,1 2009), also see <http://primus.archimedes.ee/erivajadusega-oppija> (in Estonian)



Section 3: Evidence of outcomes and progress towards inclusion

In Estonia, published data concerning persons with special needs in vocational and higher education, and in particular about the age range, targeted in the current report, is very scarce. Data on pupils with special needs (SEN) in general schools, published by the Ministry of Education and Research indicate an increase in the overall proportion of school pupils with special needs over the time¹⁵.

Academic year	The proportion of pupils with special needs
2002/2003	10.81%
2003/2004	11.48%
2004/2005	12.57%
2005/2006	12.36%
2006/2007	13.03%

The European Agency summary data for Estonia¹⁶ draws on data from the Estonian Educational Information System¹⁷ (EHIS) and identifies 24,290 pupils with SEN from a total population of 127,899 in 2006/7 (nearly 19%), not including upper secondary school. This number includes all those who receive some kind of additional learning support. Of these, 15,617 were in primary and 8,297 in lower secondary. The vast majority (23,914) were in public sector schools. The same data indicates some 4,400 pupils in special schools (around 18% of all SEN pupils) plus 157 pupils who were older than compulsory schooling age. The figures are divided by Primary (ISCED I) and lower secondary (ISCED II) age levels. No breakdown is provided in this summary for gender, type of special need (e.g. disability/impairment), or ethnicity.

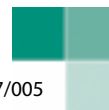
In vocational education there are no specific institutions targeted only for special needs. There were in 2008/2009 45 vocational education establishments with more than 28,000 students. In 25 of them 768 students with special needs were studying, i.e. they form 2.7% of all students. However, establishments differ by the variety of curricula provided and the number of students (communication from Ministry of Education and Research)

In 2009/2010 graduates with special needs in vocational training graduated mostly from *lihtsustaud* (simplified) first level curricula (see table below). This indicates that mainly the graduates had some degree of disability (mainly with a moderate or profound degree of disability). Those who graduate from the so-called *toimetuleku* ('coping') curricula are mainly those with moderate or severe intellectual impairment. A new 'housekeeping' curriculum (basic skills for living) has been opened for those who graduate from the coping curricula so that they can proceed to vocational training.

¹⁵ <http://www.hm.ee/index.php?049578>

¹⁶ <http://www.european-agency.org/country-information/estonia/estonian-files/ESTONIA-SNE.pdf>

¹⁷ <http://www.ehis.ee/>



Students by special needs at the vocational education establishments	
Special needs	Total
Hearing disability	38
Mobility disability	36
Simplified first level curricula (<i>LÕK</i>)	615
Coping curricula graduated (<i>TÕK</i>)	107
Vision disability	5
Psychic special needs	80
Learning disability	155
Total (<i>NB: one student might have more than one special need</i>)	1,036

Source: EHIS (20.10.2009)

According to Ministry of Education and Research in higher educational establishments the current enrolment of students with special needs is around 0.1% (see the next table). Among them approximately half are students with mobility restrictions, both with hearing and visual disability form a quarter. However, the data in Ministry of Education and research underestimates the number of students in higher education establishments, because the data presents only those who are entitled or have applied for support.

Students with special needs in higher education institutions, 2005-2009

Indicator	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2005-2009
Number of students	20	36	27	21	22	126
Number of graduates	5	2	7	8	4	26

Source: EHIS

For 2008-2013 the European Social Fund is supporting a programme, Developing youth work quality¹⁸. The programme aims to provide training for young workers in order to develop skills and knowledge necessary to support their transitions to the labour market. In the framework of the programme a database to monitor the youth life has been set up in collaboration with the Estonian Youth Institute¹⁹. The database presents data mainly from the Statistical Office, Ministry of Education and Research, Tax Board etc²⁰. A general annual statistical overview of vocational training and adult education has been compiled by Ministry of Education and Research²². Unfortunately, it does not distinguish people with special needs or disability.

¹⁸ <http://www.entk.ee/?id=343&keel=eng>

¹⁹ <http://www.eni.ee/?s=203>

²⁰ <http://www.eni.ee/?s=353>

²¹ (<http://www.hm.ee/index.php?048182>)

²² (<http://www.hm.ee/index.php?048182>)

For context, the following tables show the patterns of participation for the general population. The numbers for total enrolment by levels of education (not only for those with special educational needs) can be obtained from national statistics²³

ENROLMENT IN FORMAL EDUCATION by Type and level of education and Year					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Vocational education	29.0	28.7	27.4	27.2	28.4
Vocational courses with non-defined basic education	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4
Vocational courses after basic education	18.9	19.0	18.5	18.2	18.2
Vocational courses after secondary education	10.1	9.5	8.6	8.7	9.7
Higher education	68.3	68.8	68.2	68.4	69.0
Professional higher education	20.9	22.4	22.9	23.0	22.5
Vocational higher education	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Diploma study	2.4	1.2	.	.	.
Bachelor study	29.8	28.6	27.9	27.5	27.5
Integrated Bachelor's/Master's study	3.5	3.7	3.9	4.1	4.2
Master's study	9.7	10.7	11.1	11.3	12.1
Doctoral study	2.0	2.1	2.4	2.5	2.7
Footnote:					
Unit: thousands					
Enrolment at the beginning of the academic year.					
In 1995, 381 students studied simultaneously in evening school and in vocational education institution, in 1996 - 342, in 1997 - 230, in 1998 - 255, in 1999 - 209, in 2000 - 69, in 2001 - 25, in 2002 - 53 students.					
The data for 2004-2007 have been revised on 30.06.2009.					

²³ http://pub.stat.ee/px-web.2001/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=ESG03&ti=ENROLMENT+IN+FORMAL+EDUCATION+BY+TYPE+AND+LEVEL+OF+EDUCATION&path=../1_Databas/Social_life/02Education/04General_data_of_education/&lang=1

The proportions by 10,000 inhabitants are as follows²⁴

ENROLMENT IN FORMAL EDUCATION PER 10,000 INHABITANTS by Type and level of education and Year					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Vocational education	216	213	204	203	212
Vocational courses with non-defined basic education	0	1	2	3	3
Vocational courses after basic education	140	141	138	135	136
Vocational courses after secondary education	75	71	64	65	73
Higher education	507	512	508	510	515
Professional higher education	155	167	171	172	168
Vocational higher education	1	1	0	0	0
Diploma study	18	9	.	.	.
Bachelor study	221	213	208	205	205
Integrated Bachelor's/Master's study	26	27	29	30	31
Master's study	72	79	82	84	90
Doctoral study	15	16	18	18	20
Footnote:					
The net enrolment rates used for the computations of the indicator are based on the number of pupils and students as at the beginning of the academic year and the numbers of the population as at September 1st of the first year of the academic year.					
The data for 2005 have been revised on 30.06.2009.					

²⁴ http://pub.stat.ee/px-web.2001/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=ESG05&ti=ENROLMENT+IN+FORMAL+EDUCATION+PER+10%2C000+INHABITANTS+BY+TYPE+AND+LEVEL+OF+EDUCATION&path=../Databas/Social_life/02Education/04General_data_of_education/&lang=1

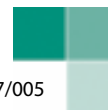
According to the Adult Education Survey in 2007 the participation in adult education for the total population has been as follows²⁵.

PARTICIPATION OF POPULATION AGED 20-64 IN ADULT EDUCATION DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS by Year, Indicator, Age group, Participation in adult education and Sex									
	Participants and non-participants total			Participated in adult education			Did not participate in adult education		
	Males and females	Males	Females	Males and females	Males	Females	Males and females	Males	Females
2007									
Participants in adult education, thousands									
20-64	810.8	386.8	424.0	516.0	232.2	283.8	294.8	154.6	140.1
20-29	200.8	102.0	98.8	150.7	74.8	75.9	50.1	27.2	22.9
30-39	183.6	90.8	92.9	126.4	59.6	66.9	57.2	31.2	26.0
Proportion (participants and non-participants total=100), %									
20-64	100.0	100.0	100.0	63.6	60.0	66.9	36.4	40.0	33.1
20-29	100.0	100.0	100.0	75.0	73.3	76.8	25.0	26.7	23.2
30-39	100.0	100.0	100.0	68.9	65.6	72.0	31.1	34.4	28.0

Among 15-24 year olds the proportion of third level education in 2008 was 6.1%²⁶. As the following table shows, this proportion has somewhat declined compared to 2005 while the proportion not continuing in education has remained at the same level. On the other hand, the proportion in the same age-group, engaged in life-long learning has significantly increased. According to the communication from Ministry of Education and Research, among people aged 25-64 the proportion of those participating in life long learning has risen by 2009 to 10,6% of the relevant age group, compared to 6.5% in 2006, thus approaching to the goal set up in the Estonian Higher Education Strategy for 2006-2013 (see p. 4).

²⁵ <http://pub.stat.ee/px-web.2001/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=EST32&ti=PARTICIPATION+OF+POPULATION+AGED+20%2D64+IN+ADULT+EDUCATION+DURING+THE+LAST+12+MONTHS+BY+SEX+AND+AGE+GROUP&path=../Data bas/Social life/02Education/02Adult education/04Participation in adult education/&lang=1>

²⁶ see <http://www.eni.ee/?s=17>



Indicator	2005	2006	2007	2008
15-24 aged- proportion with third level education (%)	7.1	6.5	6.6	6.1
18-24 aged youth not continuing education with first level or lower education (%)	12.4	14.3	14.6	14.3
15-24 aged, proportion in life-long learning (%)	19.9	20.7	21.5	37

Source: Estonian Youth Institute²⁷

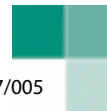
The only other source, aside the data presented above by Ministry of Education and Research, which enables to have an overview of approximately similar proportions among disabled people is the Second Survey on Disabled Persons in 2009²⁸. According to the survey results, among the disabled people over 16 years of age there were 9% with third level education (however, it is likely that some disabled adults may not have been disabled at the time of their education). Among the age group 16-29 there were 5% with third level education, 12% had vocational education, and 23% had secondary or specialized secondary education in this age group.

According to the degree of severity of disability: among the same age group with severe disability, 11% were with tertiary education level, among those with moderate disability there were 9%, and with profound disability the proportion comprised 4%. According to the survey, around one third among this age group were still studying and one third more would like to continue to study.

The survey also enabled to identify the main obstacles in acquiring education for those who would like to study. For the majority they were related with their health conditions (43% of the whole survey population), an almost similar proportion thought that economic reasons were the main obstacles. The main problems for further education are also the spread of information, the choice of curricula not corresponding to students interests. Access to educational establishments is not very good, young people have no possibility to access to internet (economic and knowledge-based), no personal assistant. The 16-29 year-olds were distinguished among other age groups for the higher prevalence of those who do not have time for further education, who have a fear of individual coping in the educational system or who lack technical aids.

²⁷ <http://www.eni.ee/?s=17>

²⁸ http://www.sm.ee/fileadmin/meedia/Dokumendid/Sotsiaalvaldkond/kogumik/PIU2009_loppraport.pdf



Section 4: Types of support for students and trainees

According to decree No.25 of the Minister of Education and Research educational establishments have to enable supporting services for students with special needs. The Ministry website²⁹ identifies the following forms of support offered in schools in order to support the development of children and to overcome learning difficulties:

- the assistance of a speech therapist can be used to overcome the reading and writing difficulties of pupils;
- psychological counselling;
- remedial education (special lessons for children with specific learning disorders, motor and mixed type development disorders, and visually and hearing impaired children to help them acquire learning skills and habits; up to 6 pupils in a group);
- preparation of an individual study programme for the pupil in one or several subjects in order to establish either lowered or raised requirements to the content of the studies and the pupil's performance, and to specify the differences in the organisation of studies when compared to the school's curriculum, etc.;
- creation of opportunity classes for less capable students who study according to the national basic school and upper secondary school curricula (up to 16 pupils in a class);
- support lessons or consultations from subject teachers after lessons;
- creation of separate classes for pupils with special needs, including children with behavioural problems;

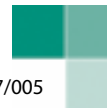
Although the vocational education establishments receive additional resources per student with special needs, as the number of students is small, the resources do not cover all the needs.

According to information from Ministry of Education and Research, if there is only one student per school in need of a sign language interpreter, the school cannot provide this for economic reasons.

The Universities Act³⁰ (§13.2.1) also stipulates that students with disability who have enrolled at the state-commissioned student place and 'who exceeded the standard period of study according to the curriculum by one year or who failed to fulfil the requirements of full-time study and have been transferred to part-time study, shall be released from the reimbursement of study costs if the student continues his or her studies according to the same curriculum'.

²⁹ <http://www.hm.ee/index.php?1510027>

³⁰ <http://www.legaltext.ee/et/andmebaas/tekst.asp?loc=text&dok=X60039K4&keel=en&pg=1&ptyyp=RT&tyyp=X&query=%DClkooli>



Section 4a: Financial support

All disabled persons receive financial support on the same basis with other students according to Study Allowances and Study Loans Act³¹. In vocational education establishments, students have a right to receive study allowances, additional allowances, since 2006/2007, including free lunch and travel compensation. The conditions differ depending whether the vocational education is acquired on the basis of basic education (first level of education) or secondary education (second level education). The following information is published on the Ministry of Education and Research website³².

In the 2009/2010 academic year, the sizes of the monthly basic allowances for vocational education were as follows:

- 600 EEK for students acquiring secondary vocational education or vocational education based on basic education;
- 600 EEK and 300 EEK as a supplementary allowance for students acquiring vocational education based on secondary education.

In higher education establishments the similar allowances exist, they vary only by the amounts³³.

In the 2009/2010 academic year, the sizes of the monthly basic allowances for higher education were as follows:

- 1,000 EEK for students acquiring higher education with 500 EEK as a supplementary allowance, with economic crisis they have been cut down to respectively 920 EEK and 400 EEK
- 6,000 EEK for doctoral students.

The basic allowance is based on the study results, supplementary allowance is meant for coverage of transport and accommodation costs and is dependent on the evaluation of the students needs.

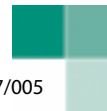
According to Ministry of Education and Research³⁴ since 2001 in higher education each year up to 5 students are supported with sign language (altogether roughly 800 hours) with over 1,4 million kroons (89,476 EUR), since 2005 approximately 16 students with mobility impairments have been supported with total amount approximately 900 thousand kroons (57,520 EUR). There have been state-commissioned student places for 22 translators of sign language (700 000 kroons, i.e. 44738 EUR).

³¹ <http://www.legaltext.ee/et/andmebaas/tekst.asp?loc=text&dok=X70048K3&keel=en&pg=1&ptyyp=RT&tyyp=X&query=%D5ppetuetuste>

³² <http://www.hm.ee/index.php?1510044>

³³ <http://www.hm.ee/index.php?1510041>

³⁴ Presentation of Tiia Kurvits at Estonian Chamber of Disabled Persons March 11, 2010, 'Disabled Persons in educational system'



In 2009 the state budget had for allowances for students with special needs in higher education around 360 thousand kroons (23008 EUR). Special allowances have been additionally made available in the amount of 20% of the basic allowances.

As the OECD review of tertiary education in 2007³⁵ has brought out there are several problems in securing equal access to tertiary education in Estonia. The four main areas outlined for development were schooling policies, financial assistance to needy students, incentives for tertiary education institutions to widen participation for students with disadvantaged backgrounds and policies targeting at particular populations. Among the latter field, the review pointed out that more effective support needs to be developed for disabled students, among others accessibility to buildings, resources for special support and allowances to assist disabled students to face costs of attendance need to be developed. The new strategies have taken these remarks into account and several ESF funding schemes are used in the following years to enhance the provision of education for disabled persons.

Ministry of Education and Research foresees through European Social Funds up to 2015 additional resources to enhance the physical access to vocational education establishments, for improvement of methodology of training for students with special needs and for training the teachers. Also eLearning facilities are promoted with the help of ESF programmes.

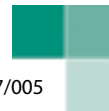
In higher educational establishments main ESF programme is 'PRIMUS', which is focusing on enhancing the supporting services for students, for organisation of consultants' networks, scholarships for better inclusion in the studies (sign language translators, personal assistants, transport services and learning materials). Also the physical access to higher education establishments is enhanced through these programmes.

Vocational education establishments receive additional funding from state budget to secure the training of people with special needs.

The main funding scheme for vocational education is based on the basic expenditure per student in vocational training multiplied by a coefficient for specific training curricula + basic expenditure, multiplied by a coefficient for students with special needs (by the above mentioned decree this is 1.5). In 2010 the basic expenditure in vocational training was 19,745 kroons (1262 EUR), the coefficients for curricula are between 1.0-2.0 (the latter mainly for arts and forestry). In 2010 a student with special needs in vocational education received additionally 29,617.5 kroons (1892 EUR). The amount of the basic expenditure is determined by government in each fiscal year. Additionally, disabled persons are entitled to grant of study allowances according to Social Benefits for Disabled Persons Act and other disability benefits which are related to the severity of their disablement³⁶.

³⁵ Huisman J, Santaigo P, Högselis P., Lemaitre M.J., Thorn, W. (2007). OECD Reviews of tertiary education- Estonia. OECD, Paris. P. P.80

³⁶ http://www.ensib.ee/frame_pensionid_eng.html

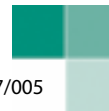


Additionally Social Insurance Board pays additional education allowance (õppetoetus) for those disabled persons studying full-time (100-400 EEK per month for 10 months per year on the approval of the costs incurred due to their disability)³⁷

In-service training allowance (täienduskoolitustoetus) is paid for vocational training and formal education acquired by a working disabled person within the adult education system. In-service training allowance shall be paid to compensate partially for actual training expenditure in an amount of up to 24 times the social benefit rate during three calendar years as of the first grant of the allowance (9600 EEK -613 EUR)³⁸.

³⁷ http://www.ensib.ee/frame_pensionid_eng.html

³⁸ http://www.ensib.ee/frame_pensionid_eng.html



Section 4b: Personal assistance, equipment and adaptations

The state pays social benefits to people with disabilities if they incur additional costs due to their disability, e.g. if they require special equipment, care or rehabilitation or if they incur costs related to transport, employment or studying. People can apply for social benefits from their local pension office. Among the services disabled people can use are the support person or personal assistant (described in detail in the Estonian ANED country report on support for independent living³⁹)

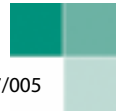
In educational establishments the main support person is the instructor for the class.

In the framework of the European Regional Development Fund allocations, educational establishments can apply for funds for renovation of their infrastructure. Among one of the criteria in the allocation is whether the needs of disabled people have been taken into account (decree No.12 from 2002 by Minister of Economics and Communication⁴⁰). With the help of these funds access to public buildings is likely to be better in the coming years.

In coordination with the educational establishment, training can be provided also in other environments outside the premises of the establishment. Thus, in such cooperation vocational training has been provided to inhabitants in Maarja Village (as described in the ANED report in independent living) and other cooperations.

³⁹ http://www.disability-europe.net/content/pdf/EE-7-Request-07%20ANED%202009%20Task%205%20request%20template%20MP_approved%20by%20author_to%20publish_to%20EC.pdf

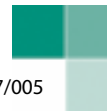
⁴⁰ <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/ert/act.jsp?replstring=33&dyn=13277804&id=226420>



Section 5: Evidence of good practice

Within the Network of Universities from the capitals of Europe (UNICA universities) in 2007 University of Warsaw prepared a proposal for UNICA universities to secure minimum standards for disabled persons in the universities of the network. In Estonia, Tallinn University is the member of UNICA and in 2010 the minimum standards were adopted by the Council of the Tallinn University as the basis for future development. The minimum standards comprise of the following statements which each university tries to follow in their planning process:

1. The needs of disabled persons (both students and staff) are considered in all strategic plans of the institution
2. The university has an official document/statement on equal rights, which specially describes the university policies and procedures concerning persons with disabilities.
3. The university has a specialist service or at least one full time employee with responsibility for coordinating services.
4. The university develops clear criteria of eligibility for services and accommodations
5. The university applies the same standards in the assessment of all students, disabled or not.
6. Students with disabilities have the same choice of study programmes as non disabled students.
7. The university ensures the protection of information concerning the disability or health of an individual and treats it as confidential
8. The university promotes disability awareness among students and staff.
9. The university provides disability training for its staff (teaching and administrative).



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