



SOTSIAALMINISTEERIUM

Active Ageing for Longer and Better Working Lives: Estonian Approaches

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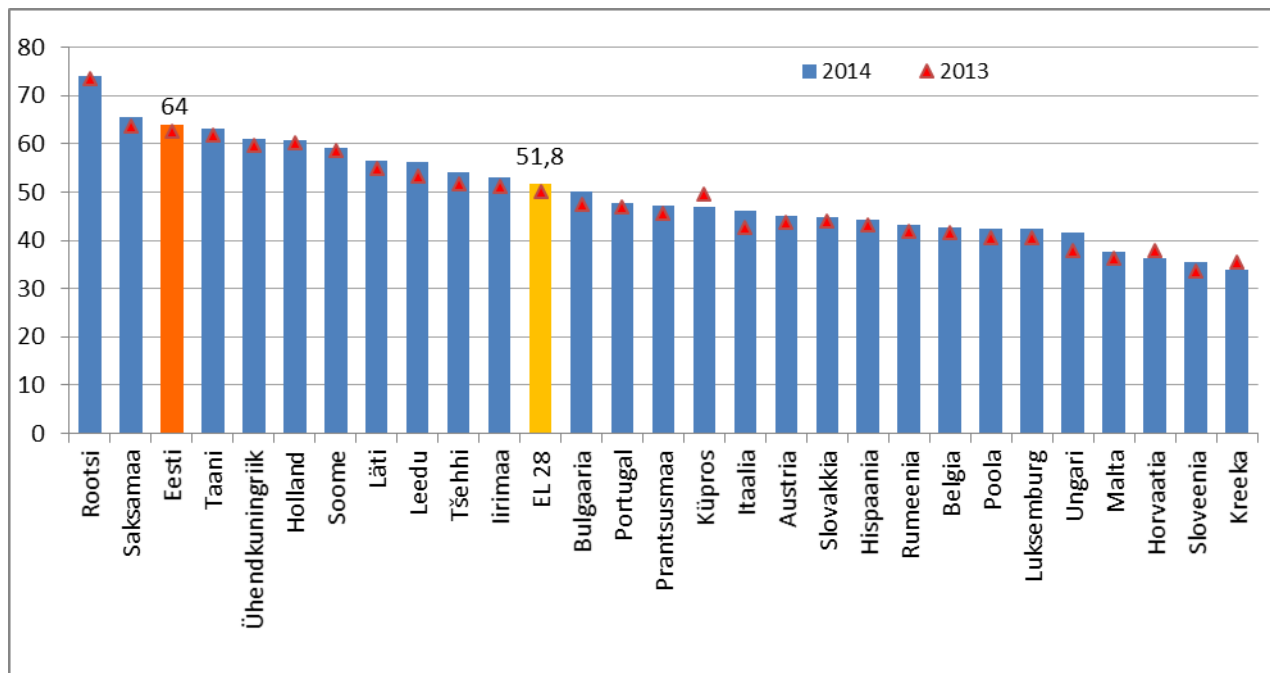
General Strategy on Active Ageing

- The aim in the development of social welfare services is to support people's **employment, independent coping, and living in a home environment.**
- In the context of development of services this means:
- 1) that in order to prevent the person from falling into the institutional services, services are developed that **support living independently in home environment;**
- 2) more attention is paid to the **prevention of problems** and their progression;
- 3) **flexible and innovative solutions** are developed, that would help to meet cost-effectively the needs of the people to achieve results;
- 4) the **cooperation with local governments** is promoted in order to ensure better access, quality and relevance to the people's real need for assistance.

General Strategy on Active Ageing (1)

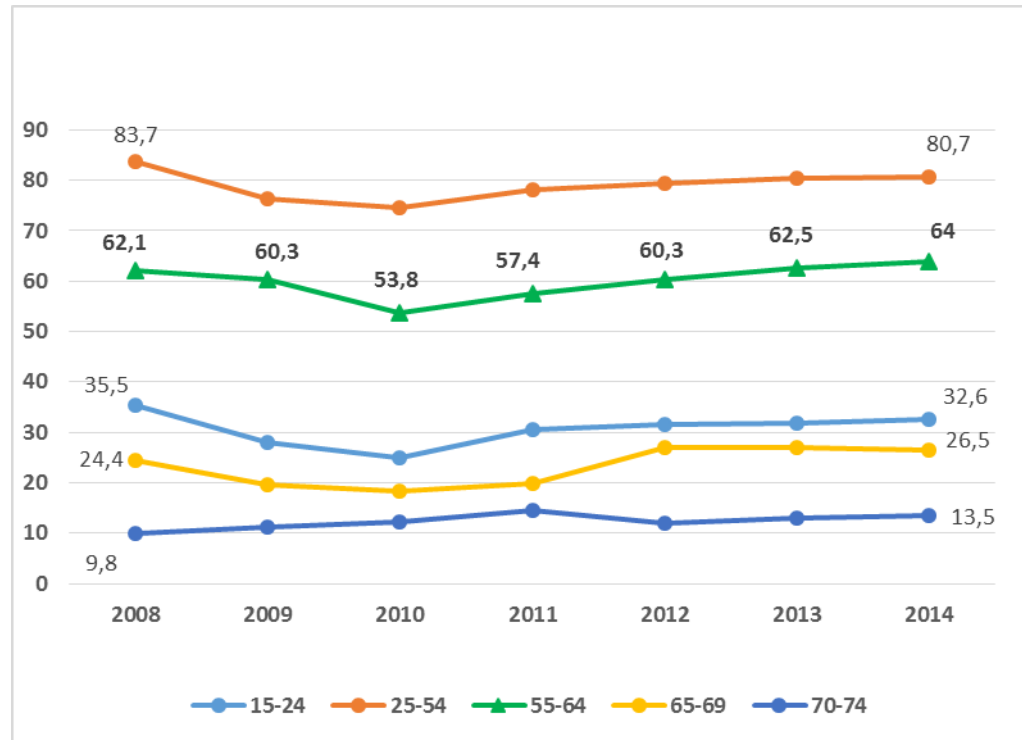
- **Regarding pension and elderly policy, the Government has agreed to:**
- raise pensions indexation to the maximum rate and ensure that average old-age pensions continue to be exempt from income tax;
- initiate a discussion about developing and implementing a pension system with flexibility on retirement ages as of 2019;
- help older people who wish to continue working to preserve their jobs by offering services to maintain and increase job skills;
- analyse the possibilities for the promotion of employer pensions and increasing the sustainability of the pension system;
- implement the support scheme for old-age pensioners who live alone as of 2017
- implement the parental pension scheme as of 2018;
- improve the quality of social welfare services (incl. care home service) by elaborating a single quality framework that helps to guarantee the uniform quality and accessibility in all regions of Estonia.

Older people, i.e. 55–64-year-olds employment rate in the European Union



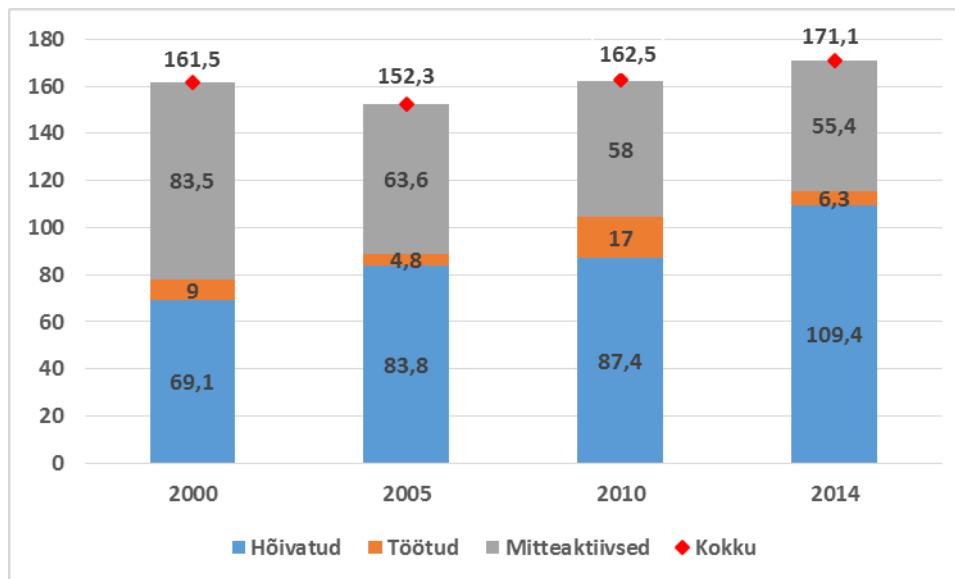
Source: Eurostat

Older People's employment rate in Estonia



Source: Statistics Estonia, labour market survey

Older persons (55-64) distribution by employment status (thousands)



Source: Statistics Estonia, labour market survey

Work Ability Reform

- From **1 July 2016 the Government will launch a comprehensive work ability reform** - a paradigm shift in the approach to people with reduced work capacity and employment.
- Aimed at enabling those persons to participate in the labour market and prevent work incapacity through **awareness raising** and **early intervention**.
- **Abolishing the establishment of percentages of permanent incapacity for work, start assessing work capacity** and **increase the provision of labour market and supportive social services** (rehabilitation, assistive technology, social services provided by local governments etc.), thus admitting persons with health damage in the labour market.
- The criteria for allocation of the benefit will be an individual's capacity to work. Persons with partial or absent work capacity are paid a work capacity benefit, but its payment to persons with partial work capacity depends on the person's fulfilment of activeness requirements.

Labour market services for older people

- Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund offers to unemployed and work seekers up to pension age various labour market services.
- **From 2015 retirement age persons will be offered** to improve the access to the labour market and prevent from „dropping out“ of labour market **the following labour market services** (ESF means):
 - Information on the situation on the labour market, and of the labour market services and benefits,
 - job mediation,
 - labour market training,
 - career counselling, work practice,
 - business start-up subsidy,
 - adaptation of premises and equipment and free use of special aid and equipment.
- In addition, the Employment Programme 2014-2015 establishes old age pensioners possibility to be supported in obtaining the qualification.

Social Welfare Services

- An important cornerstone of the reform is the provision of social welfare services.
- The Estonian social policy is guided by the aims **to support working, independent coping and living in the usual environment as long as possible.**
- The orientation is towards **prevention, reduction of needs for institution-based care and promotion of deinstitutionalisation.**

Social Welfare Services (1)

- **Services financed and provided by state:**
- Rehabilitation service - designed to improve the independent coping of the disabled, increase the involvement of the community, and foster employment or start of employment. In order to guarantee the quality of rehabilitation service, with the work ability reform it will be divided into two: **vocational rehabilitation** and **social rehabilitation**.
- **Vocational rehabilitation** is a **labour market service** that enables individual job seeking, employment and vocational development. Persons with partial capability of work will receive rehabilitation services that are linked with their (possible) employment.
- **Social rehabilitation** is a **social welfare service** that supports everyday coping like independent living, education, participation in society and the development of preconditions for employment. Children, elderly and people incapable to work will receive services that increase their social coping.
- **Provision of prosthetic, orthopaedic and other appliances** can rent or buy based on medical doctor's certificate or a rehabilitation plan. Provision of technical appliances will be linked to the assessment of a person's working capacity.

Social Welfare Services (2)

- **Participation in the labour market is also supported by the welfare services offered by the local municipalities.**
- Every local government has their own budget and the right to create conditions and regulations for provision the social services, benefits and other assistance.
- Elderly, special needs or other vulnerable people and their family members receive welfare services that support their coping.
- Local governments can develop the following services with the means from the ESF funds: home services, care services (interval and day care), social transport service, personal assistant service with the aim to encourage people's participation in working life.
- Draft Social Welfare Act that aims to improve the quality of local government welfare services by setting minimum requirements was be submitted to the Government in 2015.
- An example of a local municipality's good practice: A local municipality in Tartu has developed an interval service with the aim to ensure that people with dementia, who have to be temporarily away from home, would be staying in an habitual environment. (daycare ->apartement)

Social Welfare Services (3)

- The following measures supported by the European Structural Funds employment have been planned:
- the **delivery of social welfare service will be increased**: home services, care services - including interval and day care -, social transportation, personal assistant service, support person service;
- new **innovative services will be piloted** (e.g. video and audio care service, alarm button service);
- **people and their families with multiple coping difficulties** will be provided with social counselling services, including psychological counselling, family counselling, debt counselling, support person service, specialised social worker's (e.g. hospital social worker) counselling and specific expert counselling (e.g. legal counselling, clinical psychologists' counselling, psychiatric aid and social pedagogue counselling).
- at least **10 500 persons with disabilities, elderly and their family members with care burden will be provided with social welfare services that support their employment** possibilities (incl retaining their job, starting to work) or entrance into the labour market services.
- **several activities** (e.g. trainings, supervision etc. for social workers) **are planned to improve the quality of social services and social workers competences.**

Good practices

- In 2008 the Centre of Disability Information and Assistive Technology launched **an advisory service for adaptation of living environments** and **preparation of dwelling adaptation plans** to adapt dwellings for people with reduced mobility, visually impaired, hearing impaired people and people with psychological special needs.
- By now, 70 people on average have been advised per year.
- Until 2020, **the ERF supports the adaptation of 2000 dwellings of people with disabilities** that results in better inclusion of people with disabilities into society and improves their independent living and everyday coping.

Other activities

- June 2015 the Government approved the concept paper on the implementation of **the support scheme for old-age pensioners who live alone**. The scheme will enter into force in 2017.
- The Ministry of Social Affairs has started preparation to elaborate **needs-based assessment methodologies** and to **integrate social and health care services** in order to offer the best possible assistance, prevent deepening of problems and reduce the use of institutional care.
- The current year plans include the **establishment of a high-level committee at the State Chancellery with the purpose to map the problems regarding care burden** and will propose solutions to alleviate the care burden. The Committee will be established by the end of 2015.
- The Ministry of Social Affairs has started the elaboration of concept paper for **development of affordable and quality services to the people with dementia and development of telecare services** (until the end 2019).

Conclusion

- „**Social security, inclusion and equal opportunities development plan**“ for the years 2016 – 2023. Development plan incorporates important social sector reform programs: including the new work ability reform, welfare and health care single services system, special welfare deinstitutionalisation and human centered design and the development of pension schemes.
- The activities and goals the Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia is based on the principle that **older persons are not considered as a burden to the society, but valuable members to the community**, whose contribution to the life of society and the labour market is equal to all the others.
- Even though elderly employment rate is quite high in Estonia compared to the other EU member states, in the situation of aging population and the declining birth rate keeping older people healthy and in employment is important. The development plans and activities are oriented towards keeping elderly in employment and stay in employment, changing the attitude towards elderly, elderly health behavior and the advancement of their knowledge and skills.
- Only integrally implemented measures will increase the older people's entering and remaining in employment.
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Thank you!

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