

# Estonia Academia Exchange



(Careers Europe & Leonardo)

May 1 – 6, 2005

Attended by Kathryn Jones



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## Historical Overview

**1561** Swedes conquer Estonia, repel Russians. Social reforms; Tartu University founded in 1632.

**1710** Russia conquers Estonia, though Germans retain local control. The battle with Sweden causes 80 percent of the 100,000 Tallinn population to die—mainly by starvation and the plague.

**1816** Age-old system of serfdom is abolished.

**1860–1885** Growing national consciousness—followed by a Czarist backlash.

**1870** Petersburg-Tallinn railway finished; Tallinn becomes a major Russian Empire port. Tallinn's population grows from 30,000 to over 100,000 in coming decades.

**1905** peasants vent their anger at Czarist police and Baltic Germans, who own more than half the land in Estonia.

**1918** Estonians had been pushing mainly for greater autonomy within what they hoped would be a democratically-oriented Russian Empire. But after Soviet Russia's heavy-handedness, they declare independence. Estonian forces beat back German and Soviet militaries. They're aided at critical points by Great Britain.

**1920** Against all odds, Estonia wins independence. Amid post-war economic misery and destruction, land is taken from German nobility and redistributed to the poor.

**1935** Estonia becomes increasingly frantic about the threat from Soviet Russia to the east and Nazi Germany to the west. In the meantime, Estonia prospers, with GDP reaching or surpassing Nordic levels.

**1939** Hitler and Stalin carve up Europe, with the Baltics said to be the *Soviet sphere*. Before, the Baltics were able to play Germany and Russia off each other, but they're now virtually within the clutches of Russia—with Germany's acquiescence.

**1940** As Germany invades France, the U.S.S.R. grabs Estonia.

**1941 June 14** First mass deportations by Stalinist forces, targeting the cream of society. Others dragged out of detention cells and shot.

**1941** Germany occupies Estonia. Most of some 4,000 Estonian Jews flee to Russia, though some 1000 who do not are killed. According to German plans, Estonia would be repopulated with Germans and converted into a new Third Reich state stretching as far as Petersburg.

**1944** Soviet occupation again; thousands flee West, others head to the forests to resist. Some anti-Soviet forest partisans engage Soviet troops in battle.

**1949** More mass deportations to Siberia.

**1970s** The beginning of the *Stagnation Era* under Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev; rampant shortages and rule by jowly, gray-faced men. It was, says historian Anatol Lieven, an era of "faceless bureaucrats playing an endless game of musical chairs," moving from the directorship of one department or factory to another.

**1987** First open protests against Soviet rule.

**1988** Estonian Soviet legislature declares sovereignty. The independence drive begins in earnest; it's dubbed *the Singing Revolution* because rallies are peaceful and usually accompanied by singing.

**1990** Soviet Estonian legislature declares a transition to independence.

**1991** In January, Soviets crackdown on Baltics.

**August 1991** A coup in the Kremlin unravels as quickly as it began. Two days before, it looked like the absolute worst was about to happen. But suddenly, with Moscow's authority having collapsed, the impossible dream of restoring independence comes true literally overnight.

**March 29, 2004** Estonia is accepted into NATO. It's the first time in its history to join a military alliance voluntarily.

**May 1, 2004** Estonia joins the European Union.

**April 30 - May 8, 2005** Kathryn Jones Academia exchange!

## Background:

Estonia has an **area** of 45,227 km<sup>2</sup>

**Capital City:** Tallinn

**Religion:** Lutheran Christian (some Russian Orthodox)

**Currency:** Estonian Kroon

**Labour Force:** 654,200 (333,600 men & 320,600 women)  
Approx 588,000 are employed and 56,200 are unemployed

**Employment:** Primary sector is Agriculture and Forestry  
Secondary sector is industry and construction

**Main trading partners** are: Finland, Sweden, Germany, Latvia and China

**Population:** is approx 1,351,000 of whom 68% are Estonians, 29% Russian, 3% Ukrainians. There is a steady decline in the population due to a decline in the birth rate and migration to other countries.

## Diary of Events

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> April

Arrived at G9 Hotel for 2pm. Met Roddy and Anna (Scotland & France).

Sunday May 1<sup>st</sup>

I met hosts and other country representatives at 3pm, tour around Tallinn. After sightseeing we gathered for a meal at Pepper Sack where we had the chance to start to get to know one another.



From Left: Katrin, Margit, Carmen, Carmen, Eamon, Roddy, Anna, Kath, Ola, Ella & Habib

Monday May 2<sup>nd</sup>

We walked to Innote (hosts) offices where we had the following overviews in the form of Power Point presentations delivered by Katrin and Margit:



Our first day was spent with an overview of Estonian Education System.

A summary:

- Kindergarten for children over 3
- Basic School from age 7 to 15 (compulsory 20 lessons per week from Sep-June)
- From 16 you can choose either:
  - Gymnasium for secondary education from 16 to 18
  - VET (Vocational Educational Training) Institution (practical - like apprenticeships)
- Applied Higher Education / University (6 public Universities & 6 private)- they have their own Guidance counsellors on campus and an international Office, as many students want to work abroad e.g. Doctors are not paid very well in Estonia, so graduates seek work in more wealthier parts of Europe.

Issues are: VET schools have a poor reputation and less students progressing on to them and there tends to be less guidance given to VET students due to a lack of provision there.

Career guidance within the Education System:

- Careers Specialists recruited have to have done a 3 year degree in Psychology or Social Work background and a certificate in a relevant FE course. There is no official accredited course for Careers specialists before or after their recruitment in this sector, but specialists want one.
- Same goals as UK- raise self awareness, opportunity awareness, enable. Offer information, advice and guidance etc
- Schools - Schools have teachers providing guidance (untrained, as no official training causing issues of bias and partial information and advice given)
- Youth work - centres for support with trained workers

Wanted improvements?

Accredited training courses for Careers Specialists

A more universal and communicative service for young people

Overview of the Estonian labour market:

Career guidance within the labour market system (by Ms Mare Juske)

- 18 counsellors working with all ages in 16 employment offices in Estonia
- free service
- Interviews lasting 1 hour max
- 5 EURES counsellors working with clients seeking work abroad (strong links with Ireland, Finland and Norway for labour and skilled workforce)
- Risk groups considered are: 16-24, Mothers with young children, elderly and the disabled. The latter group are a concern as there are no equality laws to tackle if employers discriminate people on the grounds of their mental or physical disability.

- In 2000 many former Soviet companies went bankrupt and so closed down causing many redundancies.
- There are many Russian speakers in Estonia who refuse to learn Estonian. This group are finding it very difficult to find work due to this fact. There is also some resentment from Estonians to Russian people since they were liberated.
- Those living in the country side are also at risk as they are unwilling to commute to where the work is. However, there are new projects being set up to help improve industry in the more rural areas.
- There is much skilled technical labour work on offer in the Capital but no willing workers. However, some companies are willing to target Russian speakers and train them in their own language to support this work.
- Employment subsidies for budding business people. Money given to people wanting to start a business up to 20,000 kroons.

#### Overview of the Foundation Innove (Ms Leo Orro):

- Established in 2003 by Estonian Government
- Objective to promote initiatives and activities through lifelong learning through Estonian and EU programmes
- Goals: Enhance quality and reputataion of VET schools and raise LLL and support Estonian peoples' ambitions
- 6 programmes are:
  - Phare (improve qualification standards)
  - Leonardo Da Vinci (Exchange programme)
  - Business Education Programme (support new business initiatives)
  - National Observatory (support VET)
  - European Structural Funds
  - National Resource Centre for Guidance – contributes and develops National Guidance System by working with European practitioners, introduce ICT applications for guidance and counselling and improve networks. Also develop resources and publications.

This was a full, information packed day (for further details on presentations please see my personal folder in Central Team).

Tuesday May 3<sup>rd</sup>

We visited the 'Tallinn Adult Gymnasium and Career Centre' - a local school to you and me.



A renovated classroom



Overview of adult Gymnasium students; their problems and challenges &

Overview of the Tallinn Career Centre services, counsellors' role and methods used:

- Counsellors are all Psychologists and see students on a drop in and appointment basis for personal issues, Careers advice and guidance and labour information.
- They work with pupils, students, staff on a one to one and group basis.
- Issues facing young people are that they are depressed and under confident due to a lack of employment in areas of work they want e.g. much work in skilled labour but not in the arts and humanities.

We were taken on a tour around the school. Most aspects of the school are due to be renovated e.g. Sports Hall, classrooms, but there is much work to be done and the school environment looks quite negative and depressing.

The afternoon allowed participants to listen to 3 countries' guidance systems' overviews. They were:

\*Ireland – Breeda

\*UK – England (me) & Scotland (Roddy)

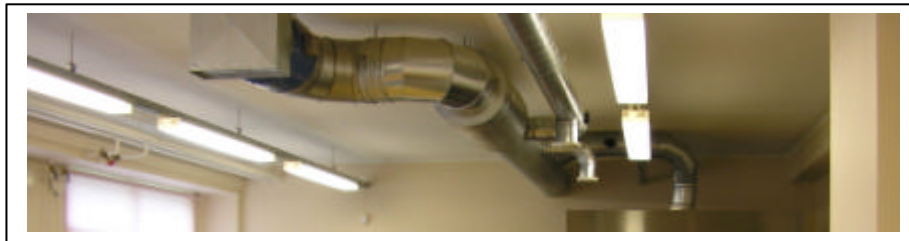
\*Norway (Ola & Ellia)

\*All of these presentations can be viewed in the Careers Europe file in Central Team.

4pm we left for Tartu, a 2 hour bus ride from Tallinn.

Wednesday May 4<sup>th</sup>

Visit to Tartu Vocational Training Centre (picture of the catering Department on the next page)



The above picture is of the Catering Department's food preparation area.

- Introduction and tour of centre (Catering – Meat, chef dept)
- Introduction of career planning Department, their role and activities

They offer: Primary vocational training, Pre-vocational training, Applied higher education, Further education and re-qualification for adults & Career counselling.

The afternoon was spent at Tartu University, where we were given a presentation on the History of the University and the following information:

- Student Career Service – see individuals and groups for information, advice and guidance
- International Students' Department –offer information and advice on working abroad and have links and vacancy notices.
- Guided walk around University - by University student to give a more in depth history of the building and its former students and visitors. We even visited the Prison that is held within the attic of the main University building. A place for students up until the 1900s. If you spoke rudely, were caught duelling etc you could be kept here for a maximum of 3 weeks. Sounds like a good idea! A picture of this below:



Thursday May 5<sup>th</sup>

Tallinn Employment Office (Job Centre). Picture below:



At the centre we were given an overview services provided and the guidance work with young unemployed

There are counsellors who see job seekers who must register for benefits and work. They spend one hour with client looking at realistic work they can do and look at what's on offer.

There are no anti discrimination laws, so disabled people rarely access this service as employers do not employ disabled workers, although the service are trying to encourage companies to take on clients with mental and physical disabilities, it is hard.

Overview of Spain's guidance system and education system by the 2 Carmens (can be seen in Central Folder in Team)

The afternoon was spent at the Nomme Open Youth centre (picture below)



- They gave an overview of the activities in the centre and who accesses it.

There are 3 to 4 members of staff who man the centre and they are there to supervise and support the young people who access the centre.

Activities included skateboarding, computer games, photography, music mixing (DJ ing), pool, space hockey, painting, drawing and socialising. Again, no access for any physically disabled young people e.g. no lifts, only stairs (many steps to get into the building and to access activities).

The evening was spent at the Grand Opera House of Estonia (Rahvusoper) watching 'Shannon Rose' ballet, based on the film 'Ryan's Daughter'. For many it was our first ballet. Most of the performers were Russian or Estonian.

Friday May 7<sup>th</sup>

Visit to Fontes PMP. We would call this a private employment agency that recruits and finds work for members, but charges for their advice and information services and group training to businesses. They also produce publications too. There we were given a practical exercise where we had to break off into 2 groups and were given a pack of cards to which we had to select 4 cards to which we thought were essential in the role we do. Surprisingly there were many debates. This was probably due to the fact we all had different qualification backgrounds, although in similar roles e.g.

- Spain – they were qualified and experienced Lawyers who'd done a teaching certificate now offering advice, guidance and information on Labour laws and rights to students
- France – They were both Psychologists
- Ireland, Scotland and England were all Careers trained, having attended a University Diploma course in Careers Guidance
- Norway – no specific need for qualification as they worked in what we would call the Employment Office /Job Centre and choosing to take a formal qualification was up to them.

## Conclusions & Thoughts

The Friday afternoon was spent discussing what we had learnt from the experience and filling in evaluation forms. Some of the summarised experiences were:

Many similarities in the system and few differences:

Similarities:

- Similar risk groups – 16-24 NEET
- Lack of motivation in young people
- Issues with drugs, drinking, abuse

Differences:

- Recently liberated and a national feeling of depression due to economic decline e.g. businesses collapsing.
- People less confident, as under Soviet rule they were told not to speak up or question.
- Many workers and students want to work abroad as the pay is substantially better
- There is a distinct lack in the Laws regarding equality of employment recruitment and discrimination
- Rural areas do not want to mobilise themselves in to the centre to find work although they are extremely poor where they are.

## Further Sources

\* All websites have icons to read them in English

[www.innove.ee](http://www.innove.ee)

Our hosts' website

[www.tulevikuredel.ee](http://www.tulevikuredel.ee)

Careers Counselling services in Tallinn schools

[www.khk.tartu.ee](http://www.khk.tartu.ee)

Tartu Vocational Education Centre and its services to students

[www.ut.ee](http://www.ut.ee)

University of Tartu

[www.ank.ee/eng/](http://www.ank.ee/eng/)

Nomme Open Youth Centre