

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Substantive session of 2002

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON
ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Initial reports submitted by States parties
under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant

Addendum
ESTONIA*

[5 July 2001]

* The information submitted by Estonia in accordance with the guidelines concerning the initial part of reports of States parties is contained in the core document (HRI/CORE/1/Add.50/Rev.1).

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Freedom of scientific research and creative activity

776. The restructuring process of Estonian science started in 1988. The main aim of restructuring Estonian science was to form a balanced system of research, serving both the community and science in general. The necessities of the country are the continued existence of the nation and the State, and progress within the international framework. The opportunities of a small country are, however, limited due to a limited State budget. A comprehensive analysis of the situation of Estonian science is presented in the document "Research and Development in Estonia 1996-1999" annexed to the present report

777. The new legislative system gave the bases for more flexible funding, formed the framework for the structures for the research, and also set the general rules for evaluation. In 1994 the Research Activities Organization Act was adopted by the Riigikogu. In 1997 the amended version, Research and Development Activities Organization Act, was adopted.

778. According to the Act the research and development institutions are autonomous institutions that are free to choose ways and methods of research and development activities and to decide on how to use the results of their activities. The research and development activities in universities are regulated by the University Act.

779. The Estonian Research Fund and the Estonian Innovation Fund allocate budget funds for research activities and innovative projects according to public tenders. All research and development institutions, groups of researchers and individual researchers have a right to participate in those tenders.

780. The State arranges public tenders to finance long-term research activities which are of national importance. The only research and development institutions that are eligible to submit bids for such tenders are those that are registered with the Ministry of Education and are internationally evaluated. This eligibility criterion helps to ensure the quality of research work. The majority of Estonian research institutions are integrated with public universities, turning them into strong research centres where the teaching is based on research work.

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International cooperation

783. Estonia has signed bilateral cooperation agreements on research, technology and culture with a large number of countries.

784. Estonian researchers have successfully competed for international grants in the Fourth EU Framework Programme and joined the Fifth EU Framework Programme. For coordinating work in those programmes a contact point has been created at the Ministry of Education and an information point. Estonian universities take an active part in such international cooperation programmes as Archimedes, Socrates, Lingua, Erasmus, TEMPUS, PHARE, etc. The Estonian research sector is fully internationalized.