

ESTONIAN INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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OVERVIEW OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN ESTONIA IN 2005

The Estonian Institute for Human Rights has compiled an overview of the human rights situation in Estonia in 2005. The document is available on the Institute's web page

<http://www.eihr.ee> at the address:

<http://www.eihr.ee/texts/ylevaade2005.doc> (in Estonian),

http://www.eihr.ee/texts/ylevaade2005_en.doc (in English), and

http://www.eihr.ee/texts/ylevaade2005_ru.doc (in Russian).

The previous overview was made by the Institute in 1999.

The only similar materials available on Estonia up to now had been the U.S. State Department's annual overviews on the human rights situation worldwide, treating Estonia as well.

The overview was prepared by a working group that included Aleksander Dusman, Merle Haruoja, Valeri Kalabugin, Matti Päts and Ene-Eha Urbala. The Institute expresses its thanks to the State Chancellery who provided financial support, and to other institutions who supplied the required data.

The Institute for Human Rights finds that, to further facilitate the harmonious and democratic development of the country, a governmental institution must be established to deal with the area of human rights on a regular basis. The Institute has tried to fill the gap since 1992. However, in the present situation of increased attention to human rights, the resources of a non-profit nongovernmental association are insufficient because of the lack of finance.

The UN Committee on Racial Discrimination (established pursuant to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination), in its Concluding Observations on Estonia's human rights reports of 2002-2004, recommended to consider the establishment of a national human rights institution (see the home page of the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs http://web-static.vm.ee/static/failid/099/rass_en.pdf).

With the Estonia's accession to the European Union, it is important to increase the public awareness on all the EU's directives and documents on human rights, with a special emphasis on the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. However, no system to provide the relevant information and, when necessary, advice to the population has been established.

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