

Estonia

The Republic of Estonia ratified the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression on 23.11.2006. There are many initiatives and measures implemented or successfully continued since the Convention entered into force.

The Programme of Estonian Government states among other priorities the need to:

- ❖ **Launch Cultural Policy Strategy 2020** – the new policy guidelines that underlines the significant role of culture in various fields of society and sustainable development. The expected result is to see culture in a broader context and analyze priorities for the upcoming years.
- ❖ **Continue the functions of Cultural Endowment**, a legal person in public law the objective of the activities of which is to support the arts, folk culture, physical fitness and sport and the construction and renovation of cultural buildings by the accumulation of funds and distribution thereof for specific purposes.
- ❖ **Realise the potential of cultural and creative industries** by raising awareness, supporting creative incubation, development centres and export related activities.
- ❖ **Value the cultural richness and access to culture** by initiating the thematic years, e.g. yearly programmes dedicated to theatre, design, museums etc.
- ❖ **Emphasise the importance of digitalisation** to develop innovative tools to protect and promote cultural heritage and increase access to the common legacy.
- ❖ **Continue the measures to value cultural diversity** - the cultural diversity springs from a wealth of diverse regions, languages and cultural heritage – diverse cultural expressions and mores. The Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Education and Science seek to secure equal opportunities for language and cultural minorities and special-needs groups to participate in culture and express their creativity.
- ❖ **Implement integration strategies** - establish the bases and objectives for the integration policy in Estonia and measures required for achievement of these objectives.
- ❖ **Value the initiatives and role of different sectors and parties**, the understanding that the private sector organisations as well as different NGOs are a vital part of sustainable cultural landscape.

Estonia has cultural cooperation agreements with more than 40 countries. The Strategy for Estonian Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid 2011-2015 creates a strategic platform for development cooperation. The priority partner countries for Estonia are: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine and Belorussia. Estonia plans to include the CCI sector in the development of SMEs. There are already several civil society organizations in Estonia that hold long-term professional contacts with different countries in Africa.

Estonia has not identified a special situation in the meaning of Article 8.2 of the Convention.

Civil society organisations and initiatives play an important role in the formulation of cultural life of Estonia. These actors are not seen only as performers or authors but also natural parties in discussions and decision making. Estonia values the contribution of NGOs who play an important role in the realization of our development cooperation goals.

In 2008 Estonia celebrated the European year of intercultural dialogue. Many of these occasions were also a result of dedicated commitment of civil society organisations.

More detailed overview about the initiatives mentioned can be found in the full text of Estonian Quadrennial Periodic Report on Measures to Protect and Promote the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in the Framework of 2005 UNESCO Convention.