

# Attracting and retaining international students in the EU

## Common Template for EMN Study 2018

Final version: 5<sup>th</sup> September 2018

**Subject:** Common Template for the EMN Study 2018 on "Attracting and retaining international students in the EU"

**Action:** EMN NCPs are invited to submit their completed Common Templates by **4<sup>th</sup> December 2018**.

If needed, further clarifications can be provided by directly contacting the EMN Service Provider (ICF) at [emn@icf.com](mailto:emn@icf.com) and to Veronika Vasileva ([veronika.vasileva@icf.com](mailto:veronika.vasileva@icf.com)) and Norma Rose ([norma.rose@icf.com](mailto:norma.rose@icf.com)).

### 1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

In view of growing labour market challenges, the EU and its Member States have increasingly looked at migration as a means to address ageing populations, sustain welfare systems and find skilled workforce. According to the OECD, the EU welcomes more migrants than any other single OECD destination, with more than two million permanent-type migration flows to EU countries in 2016.<sup>1</sup> Labour migrants comprise about one in three new migrants to the EU, however, at the same time, third-country migrants only comprise 4% of the total EU working-age population between the ages of 15 and 64.<sup>2,3</sup>

One way to tackle this shortage in skills is through the attraction and retention of third-country nationals who choose the EU for the purpose of higher education. While the EU/EFTA as a whole is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for international students, with a 4% increase of flows in 2016, the competition with other OECD countries, such as the United States, Australia and Japan persists.<sup>4</sup> The retention of international students in the EU also remains a challenge, as only a small fraction of graduates reside in an EU Member State to take up employment. In recent years, the EU and its Member States have been working on several comprehensive strategies to enhance the attractiveness of Europe's higher education system. The most prominent example at EU level is the EU's new students and researchers directive adopted in 2016 (Directive (EU) 2016/801),<sup>5</sup> which notably seeks to improve and harmonise minimum legal standards for welcoming and retaining international students. At national level, some Member States have developed new national strategies for the attraction of students and many universities have increased their efforts to attract international students, for instance by organising information campaigns in third countries and increasing their social media presence. In parallel, Member States have concluded bilateral and multilateral agreements with third countries, with the aim of facilitating the admission of third-country national students to the EU.

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<sup>1</sup> OECD, *International Migration Outlook*, OECD Publishing, Paris. [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/international-migration-outlook-2018\\_migr\\_outlook-2018-en#page24](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/international-migration-outlook-2018_migr_outlook-2018-en#page24)

<sup>2</sup> OECD/EU (2016), *Recruiting Immigrant Workers: Europe 2016*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264257290-en>

<sup>3</sup> Please note that a complete statistical overview will be presented in the Synthesis Report.

<sup>4</sup> OECD, *International Migration Outlook*, OECD Publishing, Paris. [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/international-migration-outlook-2018\\_migr\\_outlook-2018-en#page34](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/international-migration-outlook-2018_migr_outlook-2018-en#page34)

<sup>5</sup> Directive (EU) 2016/801 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing (recast).

A number of studies have been carried out in recent years on the topic of attracting international students (see “Relevant sources and literature” below). Most importantly, the 2012 EMN Study on “Immigration of international students to the EU” and the 2013 EMN Study on “Attracting highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals” looked into the immigration and mobility policies of (Member) States, as well as the policies and concrete practical measures in place that aim to attract (highly) qualified third-country nationals. The 2018 study aims to update this information and complement it with retention policies. This topic was also touched upon by the 2015 EMN Study on “Changes in immigration status and purpose of stay: an overview of EU Member States’ approaches”, by outlining the conditions that regulate the changes of status between different categories of third-country nationals.

Particularly in view of the deadline to transpose the 2016 Students and Researchers Directive by 23 May 2018, it is assumed that changes to Member States’ policies with regard to attracting and retaining students have taken place recently, which this study aims to capture.

## 2 STUDY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of this study is to explore what national practices are in place in Member States to attract and retain third-country national students. The Study will only focus on legal migrants issued with a residence permit or long-stay visa for the reason of studies, and will thus not include beneficiaries of international protection.

More specifically, the Study aims to:

- Provide a statistical overview of the number of third-country national students present in EU Member States and Norway from 2012-2017 and 2018 data if available, the duration of studies, the number of graduates who reside in the Member States after their studies, etc.
- Examine the incentives in place in EU Member States and Norway to attract and retain third-country national students;
- Describe the admission criteria of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), language requirements and the process for recognition of diplomas;
- Provide an overview of the bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements in place with third countries covering international students;
- Outline the challenges and good practices of EU Member States and Norway with regard to the attraction and retention of international students.

## 3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The overall focus of this Study are third-country nationals who are granted residence permits or long-stay visas for reasons of studies, and/or are undertaking a higher education degree (Bachelor, Masters or PhD level<sup>6</sup>). For the purpose of this study, higher education comprises tertiary education programmes at levels 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). The study only focuses on full-time students. The Study covers the period from 2013-2017 for statistics and 2012-September 2018 for policy developments, to take into account changes made as a result of the transposition deadline of the Students and Researchers Directive.

For abbreviation purposes, the terms ‘international students’ is used in the study in the meaning of third-country national students from non-EU/EEA countries. The definitions should be read in line with Articles 3 (3) of the Students and Researchers Directive.

The following categories are excluded from the scope of this study: researchers, part-time students, third-country national family members of EU citizens, vocational post-secondary education students, trainees and apprentices, au pairs and beneficiaries of international protection.

## 4 EU LEGAL AND POLICY CONTEXT

The importance of attracting international students is well-recognised by the European Union. Promoting the mobility of third-country nationals to the EU for the purpose of study has been part of the EU’s policy since 1994 with the adoption of the Council Resolution on the admission of third-country nationals to the territory of the Member States of the EU for study purposes. This is also in the context of the Bologna Process, launched with the Bologna Declaration of 1999, which is one of the main voluntary processes at European level, as it is nowadays implemented in 48 states. The Bologna Process led to the

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<sup>6</sup> Please note that the inclusion of PhD students in this study depends on whether they fall within the realm of students at national level.

establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The 2015 European Agenda on Migration reiterated the need for promoting the mobility of international students, calling for the EU to provide a safe haven for those fleeing persecution and at the same time also to feature as an attractive destination for the talent and entrepreneurship of students, researchers and workers.<sup>7</sup> In line with this objective, the international dimension of the Erasmus + Programme encourages student mobility from third countries, providing an opportunity for students from eligible partner countries to study in an EU Member State.

In terms of the legislative framework, in October 2002, the European Commission put forward a proposal for a Directive establishing common entry and residence conditions for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service. The Directive entered into force in December 2004 with a transposition deadline for Member States of January 2007.

The Council and the European Parliament adopted in 2016 the Students and Researchers Directive, which is the result of the recast of the 2004 Directive on the conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service and the 2005 Directive on researchers, based on the 2011 evaluations of these Directives by the Commission.<sup>8</sup>

The Students and Researchers Directive clarifies the admission and residence requirements by setting out general conditions for admission, and specific conditions for researchers, students, school pupils, trainees, volunteers and au pairs. The new Directive still follows a sectoral approach. While it sets uniform and binding rules on conditions for admission for students, researchers, trainees and volunteers participating in the EU's voluntary scheme, provisions on other volunteers, school pupils and au-pairs are optional.

The Study is very topical in light of the transposition deadline of the Directive. The Directive aims to make the EU a more attractive destination for students, in particular by improving their mobility conditions, allowing them to stay at least nine months after the completion of the studies period and allowing them to work (for at least 15 h/week). Furthermore, procedural guarantees have been reinforced for all categories (decision on an application within 90 days and provision of a justification of a negative decision).

## 5 PRIMARY QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE STUDY

The Study will aim to address the following:

- To what extent is the attraction and retention of students a policy priority for Member States?
- What is the number of students coming to the Member States for the purpose of studying? How many remain in the EU after finalising their studies to take up employment? What is the legal and policy framework in place in Member States and what recent changes have been made to policies and practices?
- In light of Article 7 and Article 11 of the recast Students and Researchers Directive, how are the admission and reception criteria for third-country national students implemented in practice by Member States (e.g. tuition fees, procedure to be granted a residence permit, recognition of diplomas, etc.)? For those Member States, which do not apply the Directive, what are the admission and reception conditions in place?
- In light of Articles 24 and 25 of the recast Students and Researchers Directive, how are the conditions<sup>9</sup> for access to the national labour market or self-employment for third-country nationals while being enrolled as a student and after completion of studies implemented in practice by Member States? For those Member States, which do not apply the Directive, what are these conditions?
- Have Member States concluded bilateral or multilateral cooperation agreements with third countries covering third-country national students? If so, how do these incentivise students to take up higher education in the EU?
- What is the role of universities, companies, local governments etc. in the retention of international students (e.g. scholarships, traineeship programmes, apprenticeship contracts)?
- What challenges do Member States face with regard to attracting and retaining third-country national students?

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<sup>7</sup> COM(2015) 240 final

<sup>8</sup> COM(2011) 587 final and COM(2011) 901 final.

<sup>9</sup> Article 25 of the Students and Researchers Directive

- Which good practices are in place in Member States related to the attraction and retention of students?

## 6 RELEVANT SOURCES AND LITERATURE

### **EMN Studies**

- EMN (2015): Changes in immigration status and purpose of stay: an overview of EU Member States approaches. [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european\\_migration\\_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/emn-studies-00.emn\\_study\\_on\\_the\\_change\\_of\\_status\\_final.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/emn-studies-00.emn_study_on_the_change_of_status_final.pdf)
- EMN (2013): Attracting Highly Qualified and Qualified Third-Country Nationals. [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european\\_migration\\_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/attracting/emnsr\\_attractinghqworkers\\_finalversion\\_23oct2013\\_publication.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/attracting/emnsr_attractinghqworkers_finalversion_23oct2013_publication.pdf)
- EMN (2012): Immigration of International Students to the EU. [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european\\_migration\\_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/immigration-students/0\\_immigration\\_of\\_international\\_students\\_to\\_the\\_eu\\_sr\\_24april2013\\_final\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/immigration-students/0_immigration_of_international_students_to_the_eu_sr_24april2013_final_en.pdf)

### **EMN AHQs**

- 2017.1234 – **Talent mobility** – requested 11 October 2017
- 2017.1233 – **Implementation of the Directive (EU) 2016/801 (research, studies, training)** – requested 26 July 2017
- 2017.1189 – **Retaining TCN Students** – requested 26 May 2017<sup>10</sup>
- 2017.1136 – **Transposition of Directive (EU) 2016/081** – requested on 27 January 2017
- 2016.1111 – **Verification of the reliability of potential students** – requested 25 October 2016

### **Other studies and reports**

- The Conference Proceedings of the EE EMN Annual Conference on “The EU in the global race for talents: Challenges and solutions in strengthening the EU’s competitiveness”, held on 21-22 September 2017. <http://emn.ee/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/nr9.pdf>
- OECD/EU (2016), Recruiting Immigrant Workers: Europe 2016, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264257290-en>. A study on the intra-EU mobility of third country nationals, by Yves Pascouau, Senior Adviser to EPC (European Policy Centre, a think-tank based in Brussels) on migration and mobility policies (2013) [http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub\\_3496\\_intra-eu\\_mobility\\_of\\_third-country\\_nationals.pdf](http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub_3496_intra-eu_mobility_of_third-country_nationals.pdf)
- A study by the Migration Policy Centre on “A Comprehensive Labour Market Approach to EU Labour Migration Policy” (2015) <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/824e91bc-d642-4626-9267-676945e15053/language-en>
- A report on learning mobility, by the JRC (Joint Research of the European Commission) (2015) [http://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC99969/learning%20mobility%20technical%20report\\_pubsy\\_pdf.pdf](http://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC99969/learning%20mobility%20technical%20report_pubsy_pdf.pdf)
- A study by OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), “The Impact of the Implementation of Council Directives on Labour Migration Flows from Third Countries to EU Countries” (2016) <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/download/5jlwxbzkbvfl-en.pdf?expires=1519893945&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=C2DDC88488C17F6BEEC76D45022311EB>

<sup>10</sup> Please see the 2017 EMN Inform on Retaining third-country national students in the EU: <http://emn.ee/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Inform-student.pdf>

## 7 AVAILABLE STATISTICS

### **International level**

Statistics on international mobility of students are provided by UNESCO<sup>11</sup> and OECD.<sup>12</sup>

### **EU level**

Statistics are available through Eurostat on the number of residence permits issued to third-country nationals by reason, including education reasons. The Synthesis Report will also make reference to the Erasmus Plus/Erasmus Mundus Programme in the section outlining the EU policy framework and will present some general data on the number of international students who took part in these exchange programmes. This will be developed by the EMN Service Provider (ICF).

### **National level**

Subject to availability, the following statistical data sources should be included insofar as possible:

- Statistics on the number of international students enrolled in HEIs in Member States and Norway;
- Statistics on the number of international students who have graduated in the Member State and Norway.
- Statistics on the number of international students remaining in the Member State and Norway after graduation per reason.

## 8 DEFINITIONS

The following key terms are used in the Common Template. The definitions are taken from the EU 2016 Students and Researchers Directive and the EMN Glossary Version 6.0.<sup>13</sup>

**'Employer'** means any natural person or any legal entity, for or under the direction or supervision of whom or which the employment is undertaken;

**'Family members'** mean a third-country national, as specified in Art. 4(1) of Directive 2003/86/EC (normally members of the nuclear family – i.e. the spouse and the minor children), who has entered the territory of the European Union for the purpose of family reunification;

**'Higher education institution' (HEI)** means any type of higher education institution recognised or considered as such in accordance with national law which, in accordance with national law or practice, offers recognised higher education degrees or other recognised tertiary level qualifications, whatever such establishments may be called, or any institution which, in accordance with national law or practice, offers vocational education or training at tertiary level. The term 'higher education' encompasses all tertiary institutions which may include, inter alia, universities, universities of applied science, institutes of technology, *grandes écoles*, business schools, engineering schools, IUTs, colleges of higher education, professional schools, polytechnics and academies.

**'International student'** means a third-country national who has been accepted by a higher education institution and is admitted to the territory of a Member State to pursue as a main activity a full-time course of study leading to a higher education qualification recognised by that Member State, including diplomas, certificates or doctoral degrees in a higher education institution, which may cover a preparatory course prior to such education, in accordance with national law, or compulsory training. Member States will be asked to state at the beginning of their national contribution and in the statistics provided whether doctoral candidates (PhD students) are included when referring to "students" or not;

**'Long-stay visa'** means an authorisation issued by a Member State as provided for in Article 18 of the Schengen Convention or issued in accordance with the national law of Member States not applying the Schengen *acquis* in full;

**'Residence permit'** is defined as "an authorisation issued using the format laid down in Regulation (EC) No 1030/2002 entitling its holder to stay legally on the territory of a Member State";

**'Third-country national'** is defined as "any person who is not a citizen of the European Union within the meaning of Art. 20(1) of TFEU and who is not a person enjoying the Union right to free movement, as defined in Art. 2(5) of the Schengen Borders Code";

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<sup>11</sup> <http://data.uis.unesco.org/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://data.oecd.org/education.htm>

<sup>13</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european\\_migration\\_network/glossary/](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/glossary/)

## 9 ADVISORY GROUP

An "Advisory Group" (AG) has been established within the context of this Study for the purpose of providing support to EMN NCPs during the development of the specifications for the Study, as well as the drafting of the Synthesis Report. In addition to COM, and the EMN Service Provider (ICF and Odysseus), the members of the AG for the Study include EMN NCPs from AT, DE, EE, ES, FR, LT, LU and NL. EMN NCPs are thus invited to send any requests for clarification or further information on the Study to the following representatives of the AG:

- ★ COM: [Magnus.OVILIUS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Magnus.OVILIUS@ec.europa.eu); [Helene.CALERS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Helene.CALERS@ec.europa.eu)
- ★ EMN Service Provider: [emn@icf.com](mailto:emn@icf.com); [veronika.vasileva@icf.com](mailto:veronika.vasileva@icf.com); [norma.rose@icf.com](mailto:norma.rose@icf.com)
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- ★ LU EMN NCP: [adolfo.sommarribas@uni.lu](mailto:adolfo.sommarribas@uni.lu); [david.petry@uni.lu](mailto:david.petry@uni.lu)
- ★ LT EMN NCP: [aurelija@iom.lt](mailto:aurelija@iom.lt)
- ★ NL EMN NCP: [h.k.van.der.linden@ind.minvenj.nl](mailto:h.k.van.der.linden@ind.minvenj.nl); [m.i.stegink@ind.minvenj.nl](mailto:m.i.stegink@ind.minvenj.nl); [j.i.roelofs@ind.minvenj.nl](mailto:j.i.roelofs@ind.minvenj.nl)
- ★ SE EMN NCP: [bernd.parusel@migrationsverket.se](mailto:bernd.parusel@migrationsverket.se)

## 10 TIMETABLE

The following tentative timetable has been proposed for the Study going forward:

Date	Action
9 <sup>th</sup> February 2018	1 <sup>st</sup> Advisory Group meeting
27 <sup>th</sup> February 2018	Circulation of <u>Version 1 of the Common Template</u> for the Study to COM and AG members
22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2018	2 <sup>nd</sup> Advisory Group meeting
6 <sup>th</sup> July 2018	Circulation of the revised Common Template for the Study to COM and AG members
13 <sup>th</sup> July 2018	Deadline for comments on revised template from COM and AG members
23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2018	Circulation of the <u>revised Common Template</u> for the Study to COM and EMN NCPs

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
13 <sup>th</sup> August 2018	Deadline for comments revised template for the Study from EMN NCPs
22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2018	Circulation of the final draft Common Template to EMN NCPs and COM
5 <sup>th</sup> September 2018	Finalisation of the Common Template and official <u>launch</u> of the Study
4 <sup>th</sup> December 2018	<u>Submission of National Reports</u> to EMN Service Provider by EMN NCPs
31 <sup>st</sup> January 2019	Circulation of <u>Version 1 of the Synthesis Report</u> for the Study to COM and AG Members
11 <sup>th</sup> February	Circulation of the <u>revised Synthesis Report</u> for the Study to COM, AG members and EMN NCPs
March	<u>Finalisation</u> of the Synthesis Report for the Study and of the National Reports for publication on the EMN website

## 11 TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The template provided below outlines the information that should be included in the National Contributions of EMN NCPs to this Study. The indicative number of pages to be covered by each section is provided in the guidance note. For National Contributions, the total number of pages should **not exceed 35-40 pages**, including the questions and excluding the Statistical Annex. A limit of **25-30 pages** will also apply to the Synthesis Report, in order to ensure that it remains concise and accessible.

# Common Template of EMN Study 2018

## Attracting and retaining international students in the EU

### National Contribution from Member State\*<sup>14</sup>

*Disclaimer:* The following information has been provided primarily for the purpose of contributing to a Synthesis Report for this EMN Study. The EMN NCP has provided information that is, to the best of its knowledge, up-to-date, objective and reliable within the context and confines of this study. The information may thus not provide a complete description and may not represent the entirety of the official policy of the EMN NCPs' Member State.

### Top-line factsheet [max. 1 page]

The top-line factsheet will serve as an overview of the **National Contribution** introducing the Study and drawing out key facts and figures from across all sections, with a particular emphasis on elements that will be of relevance to (national) policy-makers. Please add any innovative or visual presentations that can carry through into the synthesis report as possible infographics and visual elements.

Please provide a concise summary of the main findings of Sections 1-5:

#### **From zero to hero! - Internationalisation of Estonian higher education**

In 2017/2018 Estonia hosted nearly 4,300 international degree students, more than 1,700 exchange students and around 400 participants of summer or winter schools. Ten years ago the situation was completely different.

In September 2018 there were 15 Bachelor programmes taught in English, 14 programmes for Professional Higher Education in English, 2 integrated curricula of Bachelor's and Master's study programmes in English and 75 Master programmes in English in Estonian HEIs. All 69 Doctoral programmes are taught partly or fully in English.

In September 2018 there were also 1 Bachelor programme in Russian, 13 programmes for Professional Higher Education in Russian, and 2 Master programmes in Russian taught in Estonian HEIs.

#### **Attracting and retaining international students is a national policy priority**

This is manifest in the '[Estonian National Reform Programme ESTONIA 2020](#)' which is Estonia's competitiveness plan and a national strategy for achieving the 'Europe 2020' objectives as well as in the higher education programme of the '[Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy](#)'. The '[International Marketing Strategy of Estonian Higher Education 2015-2020](#)' claims that "one of the most effective means of recruiting talent is to do it through the higher education system by recruiting the best foreign students to study in the country and enabling them to get a job or continue as an entrepreneur after completing their studies." The goals of recruiting the best students from abroad and integrating them in the labour market are also set in '[The Estonian international investment and export action plan Made in Estonia 3.0](#)' as well as in the the '[Employers' Manifesto 201](#)'.

#### **Study in Estonia's and HEIs' joint initiative**

As for the division of work in attracting foreign students to Estonia, [Archimedes Foundation](#) through [Study in Estonia](#) is the national entity responsible for enhancing the global attractiveness of Estonian higher education. Study in Estonia helps international students find information on Estonia and the HEIs and guides them to the admissions portal [DreamApply](#). After students have submitted their applications through the DreamApply portal, the lead is taken over by the HEIs. HEIs are responsible for admission and studies of their students. Study in Estonia also raises the competencies of Estonian HEIs by various trainings, study trips and network building.

#### **Moderate tuition fees for non-Estonian programmes**

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<sup>14</sup> Replace highlighted text with your **Member State** name here.



Higher education is free of charge in Estonia for those studying full-time and in Estonian. For English speaking Bachelor and Master programmes, in different Estonian HEIs tuition fees generally vary from 1660 EUR to 7500 EUR per year.

While the government does not differentiate between the EU students and non-EU students, HEIs are free to make their internal policies that may require higher tuition fees from non-EU students. In addition, some universities offer tuition fee waivers and tuition free programmes.

All doctoral studies in Estonia independent of the study language and study load are without tuition fee, and PhD students have the right to receive doctoral allowance.

### **Various scholarship schemes and study loans available**

Estonian government and HEIs have initiated various scholarship schemes to support international students in Estonia. [Dora Plus - an Estonian Government scholarship programme](#) that offers scholarships to the international MA and PhD students' (MA students receive 350 EUR and PhD students 1100 EUR monthly).

HEIs also offer scholarships ranging from tuition fee waivers (non-monetary scholarship granted automatically to the best candidates according to the points earned in the course of admission) to small monthly performance scholarships.

Foreign students enrolled in Estonian HEIs are guaranteed access to all study grants available to Estonian citizen students.

International students can apply for a student loan if they hold a long-term residence permit and the duration of their studies according to the study programme is at least six months.

### **Facilitated access to the labour market during studies and after graduation**

Third country national (TCN) students do not need a work permit, and they allowed to work without any time limit provided that employment does not interfere with their studies.

After graduation from Estonian HEIs foreigners may stay in the country for up to 270 days in order to seek employment and apply for a residence permit on new grounds. They do not have to leave the country until a decision is made on the new residence permit application. Moreover, the normal rate of remuneration (average gross monthly salary of Estonia) does not apply for TCN graduates of Estonian HEIs. TCN graduates of Estonian HEIs are also exempted from immigration quota. The exemption from the quota applies even when they leave Estonia and return to Estonia later and apply for a new residence permit.

TCN students can exercise self-employed economic activity in the same manner Estonian citizens can.

### **Support to foreign students' family reunification and spouses' inclusion to the labour market**

All foreigners who are studying in Estonian HEIs, may invite their family members (spouse and children) to join them in Estonia.

Family members have the right to work in Estonia. Spouses that came to Estonia with visa are exempted from the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund permit requirement. However, they have to fulfil the salary criterion (at least Estonian average gross monthly salary) as well as register their working at the Police and Border Guard Board (PBGB). Spouses that have a residence permit are also exempted from the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund permit requirement. Furthermore, they do not have to fulfil the abovementioned salary criterion that is relevant for spouses that came with a visa.

From December 2018 [International House in Estonia](#) provides spouses and partners [International Spouse Career Counselling Service](#) to help them make informed choices in order to start or continue education and work life in Estonia.

### **Facing the typical challenges of a small country**

Estonia is a small, not the richest of countries with a small language and a rather unwelcoming climate. Despite its recent success in attracting students from abroad it can still hardly be considered an internationally well-known study migration destination.

### **All holders of PhD are welcome to Estonia!**

PhDs from any country may be granted temporary residence permit for settling permanently in Estonia (validity up to 5 years, may be extended for up to 10 years at a time) given that they fulfil the conditions of the issue of such permit (e.g. PhD degree is confirmed by the ENIC-NARIC; the actual place of residence is Estonia; sufficient legal income; medical expenses insurance contract).

After 5 years in stay in Estonia with a temporary residence permit for settling permanently in Estonia, a PhD owner qualifies for a residence permit for long-term (permanent) residents which is a track to Estonian citizenship. For that an additional condition - Estonian language proficiency at least at the elementary level (B1) has to be met.

### **Employers are more and more reaching out to international students**

It is stated in the '[International Marketing Strategy of Estonian Higher Education 2015-2020](#)' that actions will be directed towards employers to raise their awareness of the conditions of offering employment or internship opportunities for foreign students and the potential benefits thereof publicly recognising the best employers that offer foreign students internships, and encouraging employers' mutual exchange of best practice. It is planned that actions will be carried out in cooperation with Enterprise Estonia, the Estonian Employers Confederation, the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other employers' organisations in order to foster the foreign students' awareness about work and internship opportunities, encourage foreign students and employers to make contact and to contribute to the implementation of the action plan of Work in Estonia.

Thus, the Estonian Employers' Confederation has been organising a day when foreign students studying in Estonian HEIs can shadow employees from a variety of companies. During one working day students are introduced to companies' operation and the rules of internship. Applications from foreign students and Estonian companies to partake this initiative are welcomed all the year round.

Estonian Employers' Confederation also recognises companies operating in Estonia that have considerably supported the work practice of foreign students. HEIs are invited to nominate applicants. The laureate of the competition receives the right to use a specially designed tag on his website and publications referring to its excellence in providing students internship experiences.

Moreover, Study in Estonia, Work in Estonia and HEIs have organised several career fairs that bring together employers and foreign students.

### **Transfer from HEIs to the labour market has room for improvement**

Despite shortage of labour it has not been easy to facilitate TCN students' entry to Estonian labour market. One challenge is foreign students' and graduates' less than perfect Estonian skills. Thus, English language programmes have not been successful enough in teaching Estonian, which is typically the language used in Estonian predominantly small and medium size enterprises. Employers are generally rather reluctant to switch their organisations' communication from Estonian to English.

### **Opportunities to study Estonian for free**

In most HEIs international students have a possibility to take Estonian language courses as an elective subject within their curriculum.

In addition, the PBGB is sending students and their family members who have been granted a residence permit or whose residence permit has been extended to participate in the [welcoming programme](#) which includes beginners' language training (level A1) free of charge.

### **The success story of student application management platform [DreamApply](#)**

DreamApply, a specialised international student application management platform launched in 2011 by Estonians is at the same time a student application management as well as marketing management tool offering paperless modern solutions to more than 200 education institutions in 25 countries. All Estonian HEIs are represented on the platform and most use it as an admission environment.

DreamApply supports admission from the moment a potential applicant becomes interested in the institution until the student starts his/her studies in the institution. It can handle applications for full-time degree students or short courses such as summer schools.

### **Piloting "Orientation year" at the Narva College of the University of Tartu**

With this programme highly motivated students from the former Soviet Union countries (e.g. Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Moldova, and Ukraine) are enrolled to 4 programmes of the Narva College of the University of Tartu to compensate for the shrinking local recruitment base.

Following one-year long intense Estonian language studies those TCN students that pass B1 language test switch to their chosen study programme that are taught in Estonian, free of charge.

Most graduates of the programme are interested in staying in the area, and building up a life in Estonia. Thus, Narva is likely to considerably benefit from this programme by increasing its highly educated professionally active population.

### **Free of charge [migration advisors service](#)**

*Foreign students in Estonia may need personal and reliable legal advice on how to stay in the country after the end of their studies. Therefore, the PBGB counsels them on settling to live in Estonia, working, and entrepreneurship. Migration advisors also invite entrepreneurs, businesses, organisations and individuals to counselling, who wish to invite foreigners to Estonia or hire foreigners in Estonia. The service is offered in Estonian, Russian and English, and it is free of charge.*

**Keeping contact with international alumni of Estonian HEIs - still in the planning phase**

*It is planned in the ['International Marketing Strategy of Estonian Higher Education 2015-2020'](#) that an alumni-based network of the representatives of Estonian higher education trademark will be created to promote Estonia and its diverse possibilities for self-realisation and higher education in the selected target markets. Putting this in practice takes some more time.*

**From 2020 on government funding for higher education will support internationalisation**

*Out of 6 performance funding indicators 2 (altogether 20% of performance funding) are related to internationalisation: (i) share of enrolled foreign students, 10%; (ii) share of students participating in short time international mobility, 10%. This kind of funding system incentivises HEIs to recruit more international students.*

**Improving the situation of foreign students who entered Estonia with a visa underway**

*In a couple of years, students, researchers, etc., who stay in Estonia temporarily for more than 6 months, may register their residence place in the population register. This gives them access to services, provided by the local communities (e.g. public transport, parking, medical aid).*

**No bilateral/multilateral agreements in place or planned between Estonia and developing countries**

*However, Some of the HEIs have programmes for student and staff exchange with partner organisations in third countries, in order to exchange knowledge and learn from the best practices.*

**Estonia has transposed Directive (EU) 2016/801 in its national law**

## Section 1: National legal and policy framework in the Member State

*This section aims to provide an overview of the national policies in the Member States and Norway related to entry and residence of third-country nationals as students. The focus should be put on the recent changes that have been introduced in Member States and Norway since 2012.<sup>15</sup>*

*Please note: Statistics provided in Annex 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 will be used to contextualise the national legal and policy framework reported on by Member States in this section.*

**Q1a.** What is the **transposition status** of Directive (EU) 2016/801 in your national law?

*[Possible visual element: map indicating transposition status in each Member State]*

- transposition completed.
- in process: completion of transposition expected by:
- other, please specify:

**Q1b.** Are **doctoral candidates** (PhD students) treated as students or researchers under national law?

*Please note that if doctoral candidates fall within the category of researchers, these should not be considered in the answers to the subsequent questions.*

- PhD students are treated as students
- PhD students are treated as researchers
- Other

*Please elaborate:*

*According to the Aliens Act the status student or researchers depends on the main purpose of entry. If the foreigner applies entry on the main purpose of research work, the applicant will be treated as researcher.*

*At the same time, the rights of student or researchers are very similar – both categories may work without any labour market test or requirement for minimum income; they shall not be subject of the immigration quota, they can enter together with their family members etc.*

**Q1c.** What are the **main changes** to: (a) law, (b) policy and (c) practice since 2012 with regard to international students? Please specify whether these changes were made in response to Directive (EU) 2016/081 or other national policy priorities.

*Please describe briefly:*

### **(a) Main changes in law**

*In order to encourage foreign students and researchers to stay in Estonia, a number of amendments have been made to the legislation to simplify the process of applying for a visa and residence permit, to facilitate the bringing of family members to Estonia and to facilitate their entry to the labour market.*

*(2018: pgs 14-15 National Reform Programme ESTONIA 2020:*

*[https://www.riigikantselei.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/Failid/nrp\\_estonia2020.pdf](https://www.riigikantselei.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/Failid/nrp_estonia2020.pdf)).*

*Amendments in 2013 – not connected to the harmonisation of the directive 2016/801:*

- Foreigners who previously had a residence permit for study are exempted from immigration quota. The exemption from the quota also applies when relevant foreigner leaves from Estonia (e.g to his/her country of origin) and returns to Estonia later and applies for a new residence permit.*
- Abolished the work permit on students and the students were allowed to work without any limit on condition that such employment does not interfere with the studies.*
- The involvement of family members was simplified - foreigners who have been admitted to the studies at the fourth or fifth qualification level of vocational training, in professional higher education or Bachelor's studies, to the studies based on the integrated curricula of Bachelor's and Master's studies or Master's or Doctoral studies, the spouse of the alien, a minor child thereof etc could invite their family members to Estonia;*

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<sup>15</sup> The last EMN studies related to this public were published in 2013 (see the study on Highly qualified migrants at [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european\\_migration\\_network/reports/studies\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/studies_en))

- Facilitated access to the labor market - the rate of remuneration does not apply for foreigners who have acquired vocational education at the fourth or fifth level of vocational training or a higher education in Estonia in the professional higher education or Bachelor's studies, in the studies based on the integrated curricula of Bachelor's and Master's studies, in Master's or Doctoral studies.
- It is possible to participate in the welcoming programme (in case of newly arrived foreigners and foreigners, whose residence permit has been renewed) in order to facilitate foreigners' adaptation to Estonia.

Main amendment in 2016 (not directly connected to the harmonisation of the directive 2016/801)

- Students allowed to stay in Estonia up to 183 days as of the day of expiry of the period of validity of residence permit (after graduation).

Main amendment in 2017 (not connected to the harmonisation of the directive 2016/801)

- Foreigner who holds a doctoral degree may apply for a residence permit to settle in Estonia and requirements for prior work contract etc, do not apply.

Main amendments in 2018 (connected to the harmonisation of the directive 2016/801) regarding students

- Students, who hold a visa or residence permit (accordance of the directive 2016/801) from another Member State may study in Estonia up to 360 days.
- Students may stay in Estonia up to 270 days as of the day of expiry of the period of validity of residence permit in order to seek employment here and apply for a residence permit on new grounds. (If the foreigner finds work during the additional period of stay and submits an application for a residence permit, he or she does not have to leave the country and can stay in Estonia until a decision is made on the residence permit application).

**(b-c) Main changes in policy and practice**

When a foreign student has obtained a residence permit, he or she can participate in the [Welcoming Programme](#). It is a free of charge training programme which helps newly arrived foreigners to adapt to life in Estonia and find answers to practical questions. The Welcoming Programme consists of various short and interactive training modules (including a module on studying in Estonia) as well as a beginner level Estonian language training (level A1). Training is provided in English and Russian and courses are mainly held in Tallinn, Tartu and Narva (<http://www.settleinestonia.ee>).

Students coming to Estonia and already living in Estonia may need personal and reliable legal advice. Therefore, the Police and Border Guard Board, with support from the European Social Fund, offer migration-related advice in Estonian, Russian and English. The main purpose of the advisors is to support foreigners (including foreign students) settling in Estonia and to be as a partner to employers, entrepreneurs, educational institutions and other parties who invite foreigners to Estonia. If a student wishes to work during his or her studies or to find employment in Estonia after the end of his or her studies, migration advisors can help with various legal issues. The service is free of charge (Ministry of the interior 2018: Facilitations to foreigners studying in Estonia or having received higher education here: <https://www.siseministeerium.ee/en/news/facilitations-foreigners-studying-estonia-or-having-received-higher-education-here>).

From 2011 a specialised international student application management platform [DreamApply](#) was launched by Estonians. It is at the same time a student application management as well as marketing management tool offering paperless modern solutions to more than 200 education institutions in 25 countries. All Estonian HEIs that offer degree programmes fully in English are represented on the DreamApply platform and all but one also use it as their admission environment.

In order to attract talented international students to Estonia, a national initiative [Study in Estonia](#) was established under the Archimedes Foundation operating in the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Research. The main goals of the Study in Estonia cooperation platform were to promote Estonia as an attractive study destination, thereby increasing the share of international students, and working towards retention after graduation and finding work.

**Q1d.** Are **any changes planned** to law/ policy/ practice regarding international students in your Member State? Such planned changes could relate both to the transposition of the Students and Researchers Directive or other changes not pertaining to the Directive.

Yes, changes planned related to the transposition of the Directive.

Yes, changes planned not pertaining to the Directive.

No changes planned

If you have answered yes, please provide details about the changes planned and the approximate timeframe, i.e. are these changes planned for the short- or long-term?:

Firstly, from 2020 government funding for higher education will support internationalisation. Out of 6 performance indicators 2 (altogether 20% of performance funding) are related to internationalisation:

1. Share of enrolled foreign students, 10%
2. Share of students participating in short time international mobility, 10% (see the relevant Government Regulation in Estonian <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/131122016048>).

Secondly, in a couple of years, students, researchers, etc., who stay in Estonia temporarily for more than 6 months, may register their residence place in the population register in order to get services, provided by the local communities (improved access to public transport, parking, medical aid, etc.).

**Q1e.** Is attracting and retaining international students a **national policy priority, either within the national migration policies or compared to other national policies?** Please explain why.

Yes, this is a national policy priority.

No, this is not a major national policy priority.

Other, please explain:

Please elaborate:

**'Estonian National Reform Programme ESTONIA 2020'** which is Estonia's competitiveness plan and a national strategy for achieving the 'Europe 2020' objectives states under the subheading 'Increasing international competitiveness of higher education "internationalising at home"' – the need to attract talent to areas that are important for the Estonian economy. „The actions that support internationalisation should be continued to increase the capacity of universities to internationalise and to attract more foreign students. To do so, it will be necessary to continue to further develop the existing measures and to make Estonian higher education more attractive to foreign students. Besides acquiring an education, it is important to create more possibilities for foreign students to stay in Estonia to work after graduating from university, in particular, improve the provision of placements and jobs and opportunities for learning Estonian for foreign students.“ It is also stressed that "foreign students, both those who leave the country after their studies and those who stay, are important for Estonia. Those who leave may become "ambassadors" for the Estonian state, culture and economy in their new country, who can contribute to developments in Estonia through their contacts (pgs 14-15).

The challenges that will be faced by Estonian higher education in the coming years are set in the **'Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy'** and its **higher education programme**, which, inter alia, states that it is necessary to support the introduction of international experience and competence to higher education institutions in order to improve the quality of education and make education more attractive. It is also considered substantial to make an effort to get people to participate in the international labour market, where professional knowledge and skills, foreign language(s), knowledge of other cultures and tolerance are of ever-increasing importance.

It is also stated at the **'Estonian Research and Development and Innovation Strategy 2014-2020 "Knowledge-based Estonia"'** that one of the most important barriers to the development of the Estonian economy and society is the limited human capital. Opportunities must be found for bringing foreign specialists to Estonia. It also emphasises that Estonia needs a migration policy that supports the study and employment of specialists that are required for the state and the economy (pg 9).

**'International Marketing Strategy of Estonian Higher Education 2015-2020'** commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Research is the main strategy in Estonia focussing on internationalisation of Estonian higher education. The rationale of the strategy largely arises from an understanding that "one of the most important factors in increasing the competitiveness of the economy is a well-thought-through talent policy – to find people with knowledge and skills beneficial to the country and implement them with maximum efficiency for the development of the society." It also claims that "one of the most effective means of recruiting talent is to do it through the higher education system by recruiting the best foreign students to study in the country and enabling them to get a job or continue as an entrepreneur after completing their studies." Thus, the overall objective of the International Marketing Strategy of Estonian Higher Education 2015-2020 is to contribute to the Estonia 2020 competitiveness plan, and to achieve the goals of the Lifelong Learning Strategy.

The Strategy poses two indicators to measure its success by the year 2020: (i) The proportion of foreign students is 10% of all degree-level students; (ii) 30% of the international graduates at master's and doctoral level work in Estonia after graduating.

**'The Estonian international investment and export action plan Made in Estonia 3.0'** implemented by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, stipulates the actions that introduce Estonia as an attractive place for working. The Strategy emphasises the need to coordinate the objectives of the education system with the needs of entrepreneurship more efficiently to improve labour supply.

In **the 'Employers' Manifesto 2014'** (which however is not an Estonian Government document, but a document of the Estonian Employers' Confederation) it is outlined that HEIs that increase the share of foreign students have a decisive role in attracting talents to Estonia. Employers must make every effort to offer foreign students more apprenticeships that may attract them to stay in Estonia as employees or entrepreneurs. The target is to triple the number of foreign students in Estonia by 2022.

**Q1f.** Does your Member State have a **national strategy**, or a **lower level (e.g. ministerial, regional) strategy**, for attracting and/or retaining international students?

- Yes, national strategy in place.
- Yes, lower level strategy in place.
- No, a national strategy is not in place.

If you have answered yes, please indicate whether the strategy focuses on attraction, retention or both, and provide details about the main elements of the strategy (e.g. name, policy goals, year of adoption):

**'Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy'** and its higher education programme, states that it is necessary to support the introduction of international experience and competence to higher education institutions in order to improve the quality of education and make education more attractive. It is also considered substantial to make an effort to get people to participate in the international labour market, where professional knowledge and skills, foreign language(s), knowledge of other cultures and tolerance are of ever-increasing importance.

Ministry of Education and Research developed and is responsible for implementing **'International Marketing Strategy of Estonian Higher Education 2015-2020'**, which is a document more specifically focussing of attracting and (somewhat less) on retaining foreign students.

**Q1g.** Does your Member State target **specific fields of studies/subject areas** (outside bilateral/multilateral cooperation) as regards the attraction and/or retention of international students? If so, please briefly elaborate on the reasons why these fields of studies/subject areas are targeted. Please select all boxes that apply.

- Yes, specific fields of studies are targeted for the attraction of international students.
- Yes, specific fields of studies are targeted for the retention of international students.
- No specific fields of studies are targeted.

If you have answered yes, please provide a list of the study fields targeted and the reasons. Please differentiate clearly between attraction and retention:

**Estonian Research and Development and Innovation Strategy 2014-2020** "Knowledge-based Estonia" and **Estonian Entrepreneurship Growth Strategy 2014-2020** state that in conditions where the state interferes with the economy as little as possible, one of the opportunities to affect the structure of the economy is the focussed support of carefully selected RDI fields and activities. On the basis of an analysis organised by the Estonian Development Fund and made in cooperation between enterprises and research institutions, the growth areas are the following:

1. Information and communication technology (ICT) horizontally through other sectors
2. Health technologies and services
3. More effective use of resources

**Q2.** Is there a current or recent **public debate** (i.e. within the past year) with regard to international students in your Member State (e.g. in Parliament, media, etc.)?

- Yes, there is a public debate at national level.
- No, there is no significant public debate at national level.

If you have answered yes, please elaborate on the main issues of the debate:

One topic that has been discussed in Estonia is how to integrate foreign students that have graduated in Estonia to Estonian labour market to increase the impact of foreign students to the whole society. This issue, is being forgotten and rediscovered from 2014 on (see e.g. <http://mottehommik.praxis.ee/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Valisuliopilased-Eestis.pdf> (in Estonian)).

Another, more recent topic discussed in Estonia has focussed on the misuse of residence permits for studying in Estonia. There have been several cases where students from third countries have applied for a residence permit for studying in Estonia, all the while having no intention to enter HEI. In order to mitigate the risk of illegal immigration and absconding, the Police and Border Guard Board has taken several steps in cooperation with the relevant HEIs. The cases of not granting a residence permit for studying in one particular private HEI that did not get positive academic accreditation for its study programmes or refusing to prolong its students' residence permits has also been addressed in Estonian media.

With changes in the political landscape and the rising popularity of different political parties there have also been public discussions on whether or not Estonia should strive for a more international student body when a large percentage of those who graduate here do not stay on to live and work in the country.

There have also been discussions on the increasing number of curricula that are taught in English, which in turn means that oftentimes Estonian students are not able to study a specific curriculum in Estonian.

**Q3.** What is the **structure and governance of the national higher education system** in your Member State? Please answer by elaborating on the following aspects:

**Q3a.** Is there a specific **public entity(ies)** at national level which is responsible for international students in regards to their studies and what are they competent for? What is its role in the application process/supervision of these students?

Please explain:

While HEIs are responsible for admission and studies of their students, Archimedes Foundation (an independent body established by the Estonian government with the objective to coordinate and implement different international and national programmes and projects in the field of training, education and research) through [Study in Estonia](#) is the national entity that is responsible for enhancing the attractiveness of Estonian higher education on the European and global level.

Study in Estonia is a cooperation platform of institutions of higher education in Estonia to increase visibility of Estonia as an attractive study destination and promote the possibilities for studying for international students. The activities are coordinated by Archimedes Foundation in the framework of Dora Pluss activity and financed by the European Regional Development Fund. The main cooperation partners of Study in Estonia have been institutions providing degree programmes fully taught in English and internationally recognised:

- [University of Tartu](#)
- [Tallinn University of Technology](#)
- [Tallinn University](#)
- [Estonian University of Life Sciences](#)
- [Estonian Academy of Arts](#)
- [Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre](#)
- [Estonian Business School](#)
- [Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences](#)

Study in Estonia is mainly oriented at raising the competencies of Estonian HEIs, which is done by various trainings, study trips and network building. The competencies supported by Study Estonia include marketing, but also the cooperation between marketing and admissions (how to make the admission process faster and more fluent for the students), international cooperation between Estonian HEIs and HEIs from other countries, developing sufficient support services within the individual Estonian HEIs for international students.

Regarding Study in Estonia's role in the application process/supervision of these students, Study in Estonia helps international students find necessary information on Estonia and the HEIs and guides them to the admissions portal [DreamApply](#). After the students have submitted their applications



*through the DreamApply portal, the lead is taken over by the HEIs. Study in Estonia does not provide any supervision or support with the actual application process itself.*

**Q3b.** Do migration authorities cooperate with HEIs? If yes, in what ways do they cooperate? Is there an institutionalised cooperation mechanism?

- Yes, migration authorities cooperate with HEIs.
- No, migration authorities do not cooperate with HEIs.

*If you have answered yes, please explain the ways in which they cooperate:*

*The HEIs, The Police and Border Guard Board, Ministry of Education and Research have multilateral cooperation in order to discuss relevant topics with regard to the foreign students in Estonia.*

*While there is no formal cooperation agreement between Estonian HEIs and the Police and Border Guard Board (PBGB), cooperation is of good quality.*

*HEIs have to provide the PBGB a proof (an Invitation Letter) that an applicant of a residence permit for studying in Estonia has been invited by the HEI to commence his/her studies (Aliens Act § 163).*

*The HEI where an alien who was granted a temporary residence permit for studying in Estonia is also as a Sponsor obliged to notify the PBGB of a failure of an alien who has received a temporary residence permit for study and an alien studying in Estonia on the basis of a long-stay visa or residence permit to commence the studies within the prescribed term, of noncompliance with the curriculum to the extent required for holding a residence permit for study, of the exmatriculation from the HEI, of the discontinuation or disruption of studies (Aliens Act § 287).*

*Moreover, the PBGB keeps HEIs and Study in Estonia informed about the procedural changes in the migration rules (e.g. via meetings as well as a newsletter managed by the PBGB's Migration Advisers). Another important aspect of such cooperation is PBGB officials' participation in information days that the HEIs and Study in Estonia organise for foreign students (predominantly at the beginning of the academic year) to explain to students the migration rules and procedures.*

**Q3c.** Is there an approval procedure<sup>16</sup> in place in your Member State for public/private HEIs for the purpose of hosting international students? If so, are international students only allowed to study in those HEIs?

- Yes.
- No.

*Please explain. If you have answered yes, please indicate whether international students are only allowed to those in those HEIs:*

*No, in Estonia, there is no special approval procedure established for HEIs. All accredited HEIs may invite foreign students to study. The HEI is responsible that foreign student meets the criteria set in relevant legislation in order to study (previous education, sufficient knowledge of language, etc.).*

**Q3d.** Is higher education for third-country nationals funded by the state (i.e. state-sponsored) in your Member State?

- Yes, higher education is state-sponsored for third-country nationals.
- No, higher education is not state-sponsored for third-country nationals.
- Other (e.g. state support depends on the student's country of origin):

*Please elaborate:*

*Since 2012/2013 academic year, higher education is free of charge in Estonia for those (i) studying full-time and (ii) in Estonian.*

*Tuition fees for not Estonian Bachelor and Master programmes in different Estonian HEIs can vary considerably depending on the level of studies and the speciality in question. Generally, tuition fees vary from 1660 EUR to 7500 EUR per year (except medicine programme with 11 000 EUR per year) for Bachelor and Master programmes. Some of the more expensive specialities are medicine, law, business administration and social sciences. Some higher education institutions may differentiate tuition fees for students from the European Union and from outside the European Union. In addition,*

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<sup>16</sup> Article 15 of the Students and Researchers Directive

*some universities offer various Master and Bachelor programmes with no tuition fee at all (tuition fee waivers, tuition free programmes).*

*All doctoral studies in Estonia independent of the study language and study load are without tuition fee, and PhD students have the right to receive doctoral allowance (660 €) paid by the government during the nominal time of their studies.*

*However, doctoral students at the privately owned Estonian Business School, who wish to enrol as individual/independent PhD students have to pay credit point based tuition fee (For more information see <https://ebs.ee/en/doctoral-studies#Tuition%20&%20Scholarships> ).*

*In addition, some universities do not ask for tuition fees for some English speaking programmes at all.*

*It should also be mentioned that foreign students enrolled in Estonian HEIs are guaranteed access to all study grants available to Estonian citizen students.*

## Section 2: Measures and incentives to **attract** international students

*This section examines the measures and incentives to attract international students in place in the Member States in terms of admission conditions; hosting and welcoming international students; special incentives and measures; external factors; challenges and good practices in attracting international students.*

### 2.1 Admission conditions for international students

**Q4a.** Which are the common immigration **admission conditions** applicable for all international students determined by the immigration authorities for the purpose of residence in the territory of your Member State?

*Please elaborate:*

*Foreigners applying for temporary residence permit for studying in Estonia have to meet the general conditions as well as supplementary conditions of the issue of a temporary residence permit to an alien. General conditions are outlined in the Aliens Act § 117. 'Conditions of issue of temporary residence permit'. They include the following requirements:*

- 1) the purpose of application for the Estonian temporary residence permit is justified;*
- 2) the actual place of residence is Estonia;*
- 3) sufficient legal income which would enable an alien and the family members of an alien the subsistence in Estonia;*
- 4) a medical insurance contract.*

*The supplementary conditions for the issue of a temporary residence permit on a specific basis have been provided for in § 163 in the Aliens Act. There is a requirement of proof of commencement of studies. Thus the relevant HEI or international student organisation has to submit an invitation to the Police and Border Guard Board.*

*Another supplementary requirement for issuing a residence permit for studying in Estonia is language proficiency in language of instruction (§ 168 of the Aliens Act).*

Are the following **admission conditions** listed under Q4b-Q4i required in your Member State? Please answer with Yes/No and shortly describe the admission condition.

**IMPORTANT:** Please explain also under each question Q4b-4i how each of the below listed admission conditions are considered to attract international students / are used to attract them / are used flexibly in order to attract international students, or are there some that are considered disincentives.

*[Possible visual element: for the Synthesis Report, the applicable admission conditions (including fees) could be visualised in one infographic page]*

**Q4b.** Is a proof of **acceptance** by HEI required in your Member State in order to obtain the visa/residence permit?<sup>17</sup>

Yes.

No.

*If you have answered yes, please elaborate:*

*Upon application for a residence permit for studies, the relevant educational institution or international student organisation shall submit an invitation to the Police and Border Guard Board (§ 163 'Requirement of proof of commencement of studies' of the Aliens Act).*

**Q4c.** How is the **academic recognition** of foreign academic degrees regulated in your Member State? Is this done in a centralised manner (e.g. by a specific organisation) or by each HEI?

Recognition of degrees carried out centrally.

Recognition of degrees carried out by each HEI.

Other

*Please explain:*

*Estonia has a flexible system for assessment of foreign qualifications. According to the Government Regulation "The assessment and academic recognition of foreign qualifications" the competent*

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<sup>17</sup> Article 11 (1) of the Students and Researchers Directive

recognition authorities are higher education institutions and employers depending on the purpose of recognition. The competent assessment authority is the Estonian ENIC/NARIC (Academic Recognition Information Centre), but higher education institutions or employers may also assess the foreign qualifications if they have appropriate experience in assessment of foreign qualifications and if the institution has sufficient information on the education system of the foreign country, the educational institution and the qualification structure concerned. Most higher education institutions and employers in the public sector require the Estonian ENIC/NARIC assessment and the statement of comparison. This requirement is the initiative of higher education institutions and employers, and is included in the internal regulations of the institutions.

**Q4d.** What are the **level of tuition fees for third-country nationals** in your Member State? <sup>18</sup> If applicable, please distinguish between the different qualifications levels (ISCED levels 5-8).

- If possible, please provide here a range of the level of tuition fees per academic year in euro/national currency:

*Tuition fees for not Estonian Bachelor and Master programmes in different Estonian HEIs can vary considerably depending on the level of studies and the speciality in question. Generally, tuition fees vary from 1660 EUR to 7500 EUR per year (except medicine programme with 11 000 EUR per year) for Bachelor and Master programmes. Some of the more expensive specialities are medicine, law, business administration and social sciences.*

*Some HEIs may differentiate tuition fees for students from the European Union and from outside the European Union. In addition, some universities offer various Master and Bachelor programmes with no tuition fee at all (tuition fee waivers, tuition free programmes).*

*Please explain:*

*For the range of tuition fees in English speaking BA programmes look here:*

*<http://www.studyinestonia.ee/bachelor>. For the range of tuition fees in English speaking MA programmes look here: <http://www.studyinestonia.ee/master>.*

- Is evidence of payment an admission condition?

Yes.

No.

*As for the bigger HEIs in this field (Tallinn University, Tallinn University of Technology and University of Tartu) the evidence of payment of tuition fee is not an admission condition. The admission is fully given on the basis of the academic requirements and documents such as required previous degree of education, motivation letter, admission interview, proof of English proficiency, copy of ID/passport etc. However, there might be some HEIs in Estonia that require the evidence of payment of tuition fee.*

- Are the fees capped in your Member State (i.e. is there a higher/lower threshold limit imposed)?

Yes.

No.

- Are the fees for international students the same as those for domestic students? If no, what is the difference (i.e. are they higher or lower)?

Yes.

No.

If you have answered no, please elaborate:

*While the Government does not differentiate between the EU students and non-EU students, HEIs are free to make their internal policies that may require different, commonly higher tuition fees from non-EU students. More specifically, one English speaking BA programme from the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre demand different tuition fees from EU and non-EU students. So do several MA programmes from the Estonian Academy of Arts and Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre as well as Tartu University's MA programme Excellence in Analytical Chemistry.*

- Are specific groups of international students exempt from fees? Which ones and why?

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<sup>18</sup> See Article 11(1)(b) of the Students and Researchers Directive

Yes.

No.

*If you have answered yes, please elaborate on which groups are exempted and why:*

*Foreigners that are accepted to Estonian language study programmes (University Act § 13<sup>3</sup> (1)) as well as students with moderate, severe or profound disabilities, and parents or guardians of children under the age of 7 or a disabled children (University Act § 133 (6)) can study free of charge.*

**Q4e.** What is the level of **administrative fees** for third-country nationals in your Member State? Please elaborate also on other types of fees (e.g. administrative fees at universities)

*Please elaborate:*

*The Estonian HEIs each determine their own application fees, which are currently anywhere between 0-120 euros, depending on the HEI and the curriculum. As for the biggest HEIs in Estonia, international candidates applying to English-taught programmes at Tallinn University are required to pay a non-refundable application fee of 80 euros. The similar fee applies to Tallinn University of Technology (100 euros) and University of Tartu (50 euros).*

*However, if a foreign student applies to be enrolled in Estonian Language programme, in a public HEI, (s)he does not have to pay administrative fee. The latter rule does not apply to private HEIs.*

**Q4f.** Are international students required to provide a proof of sufficient **knowledge of the language** of the course?<sup>19</sup> If so, what is the required level? Does the student have to provide an attestation (e.g. TOEFL test)?

Yes, proof of sufficient knowledge of the language of the course is required in general.

A proof is required for specific courses.

No, proof of sufficient knowledge of the language of the course is not required.

*If proof is required (either in general or for specific courses), please elaborate and specify the required level, using the levels defined by the CEFR:<sup>20</sup>*

*Please elaborate:*

*Aliens Act (§ 168. 'Requirement for language proficiency in language of instruction') establishes:*

*(1) A temporary residence permit for study may be issued if the purpose of the stay of an alien in the state is study according to the curriculum of a higher education and **his or her proficiency in the language of instruction is sufficient.***

*(2) The proficiency in the language of instruction of an alien is considered to be sufficient if it corresponds to **the minimum requirements set by the educational institution for language of instruction or if an alien commences in-depth studies in the national language.***

*The general procedure of proofing one's language proficiency is regulated with Minister of Education and Research Regulation No 65. However **it is up to each individual HEI to choose which proofs for language proficiency they accept.** It is stipulated in this regulation that HEIs have to publicly available all relevant information regarding minimum language proficiency required for being enrolled in a programme as well as and means to prove it.*

*All international applicants need to present a certificate of English skills. All internationally recognised language proficiency tests (e.g. IELTS, TOEFL) are accepted, though some institutions may run individual language tests. Usually, the required minimum test result for BA and MA is 5,5 in IELTS and 70 in TOEFL (IBT). Requirements might be a bit different for each university (For example, see Tallinn University's English language requirements: <https://www.tlu.ee/en/proof-english-proficiency> ).*

– The student has to provide an attestation.

Yes, an attestation is required for all courses.

An attestation is required for specific courses.

No.

<sup>19</sup> See Article 11(1)(c) of the Students and Researchers Directive

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale>

**Q4g.** Are international students automatically qualified for **health insurance**?<sup>21</sup>

- Yes, students automatically qualify for health insurance.
- No, students need to submit proof of health insurance.

*Please elaborate:*

*Aliens Act lists the conditions of issue of a residence permit. One of the several requirements is a medical insurance contract in compliance with the requirements provided for in § 120 (outlining the insurance cover) of this Act unless otherwise provided for in this Act (Aliens Act § 117 (1) 4).*

*Automatically qualified for health insurance are foreign students who have an Estonian permanent resident permit.*

**Q4h.** Is there a pre-determined level of **sufficient resources** for international students at national level?<sup>22</sup> If so, what is the level of sufficient resources and what type of resources are accepted?

- Yes.
- No.

– What is the level of sufficient resources and what documents are accepted as proof?

*Please explain:*

*Aliens Act lists the conditions of issue of temporary residence permit. Among other requirements the latter include sufficient legal income which would enable an alien and the family members of an alien the subsistence in Estonia (Aliens Act § 117 (1) 3).*

*Level of sufficient resources are defined in every year. In 2018 the sufficient level for the students is 280.- € per month.*

– What type of resource(s) are accepted by your Member State? Please check all applicable boxes.

- Bank statement.
- Guarantee by a third person.
- Other, please specify:

*Estonia is flexible in this matter, all proofs of legal income are accepted. Sufficient legal income for student may be scholarships, means of subsistence, benefits paid by a foreign state, the subsistence ensured by family members, etc (the list is not limited and it can also be proved by other means of legal income).*

#### **Q4i. Other admission conditions**

If applicable, please describe any other admission conditions for the purpose of residence on the territory of your Member State:

*Please elaborate:*

*Aliens Act also requires that the actual place of residence is Estonia (Aliens Act § 117 (1) 2). An alien is required to register his or her place of residence in the procedure prescribed by the Population Register Act within one month from the date of arrival into Estonia on the basis of the residence permit (Aliens Act § 121(1)).*

## **2.2 Special incentives for attracting international students**

**Q5.** Please indicate which of the incentives listed below (Q5a-Q5i) are in place in your Member State and please provide a brief description. What are the incentives/measures carried out 'centrally' or by individual HEIs. If measures are carried out by the state/regional authorities, individual HEIs and/or private entities (e.g. companies, research organisations, etc.), please provide examples.

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<sup>21</sup> See Articles 7(1)(c) and 11(2) of the Students and Researchers Directive

<sup>22</sup> See Articles 7(1)(e), 7(3) and 11(1)(d) of the Students and Researchers Directive

**NB:** Please also state whether measures to attract are targeted to a specific qualification level (ISCED levels 5-8) or sciences/fields of education (e.g. STEM<sup>23</sup>).

[Possible visual element to be included in the Synthesis report: the incentives used in Member States could be visualised in a one infographics page]

**Q5a.** Does your Member State carry out **promotional activities and dissemination of information in the countries of origin?** Please select all boxes that apply and elaborate.

- Yes, carried out centrally.
- Yes, carried out by HEIs.
- Yes, carried out by other (educational) organisations.
- No.

If you have answered yes, please explain/elaborate by giving 1-2 examples.

Study in Estonia manages the central website [www.studyinestonia.ee](http://www.studyinestonia.ee) that covers all the necessary information needed to find a suitable programme from an Estonian HEI. They also manage central social media channels like the Study in Estonia Facebook page, Instagram account, Twitter, LinkedIn and Youtube. The Study in Estonia social media channels are used to promote Estonia as a study destination to prospective students in all study fields, provide a glimpse into the life of an international student in Estonia and promote Estonian HEIs. The channels are used for both organic content and paid and targeted campaigns.

Study in Estonia is also responsible for compiling relevant informational materials (such as flyers, brochures, posters, banners, etc.) that give an overview of Estonian higher education and the programmes offered. The materials are made available to HEIs and other relevant partners in both physical and digital form.

Study in Estonia is the main coordinator when participating in various higher education networking fairs, which allow Estonian HEIs to find new partners for exchange or cooperation on joint programmes, etc. For example, Estonia is represented with a national booth in the EAIE (European Association of International Education) fairs and at NAFSA fairs in North-America. Study in Estonia also supports the participation of Estonian HEIs in those networking fairs by providing financial support for the participation fees.

Outside of the Study in Estonia framework the cooperation between Estonian HEIs in international marketing is very active. For example, Tallinn University, University of Tartu and Tallinn University of Technology have a good cooperation in exchanging information on various aspects of the international marketing and admission. That includes comparing information about educational portals, agents, admission practices, development projects and much more. Secondly, the cooperation between HEIs includes organising of marketing events in target countries. These events include mainly public info sessions, education fairs, school and university visits.

**Q5b. Are scholarships and bursaries available?** Please select all boxes that apply and elaborate by giving 1-2 examples (incl. the amount, type and length of the scholarship/bursary).

- Yes, provided by the state/regional authorities. Please elaborate by providing 1-2 examples:
- Yes, provided by HEIs. Please elaborate by giving 1-2 examples:
- Yes, provided by private entities. Please elaborate by giving 1-2 examples:
- No.

Estonian government and universities have initiated [various scholarship schemes](#) in order to support international students in Estonia.

**(i) Dora Plus - an Estonian Government scholarship programme**

This programme is initiated with the aim to improve Estonia's visibility and attractiveness as a destination for studying and research. The programme is implemented from 2015 to 2023 with the support of EU Regional Development Fund. Its Action 2: Study and research-related incoming mobility offers scholarships to the international MA and PhD students' full-time studies in the Estonian HEIs.

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<sup>23</sup> Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

The length of the studies supported with this measure is nominal time of studies for both MA students PhD students. However, for MA students the scholarship is granted for one academic year at a time (for 10 months). MA students receive 350 EUR and PhD students 1100 EUR monthly.

### **(ii) University scholarships**

HEI's scholarships range from tuition fee waiver scholarships (non-monetary scholarship granted automatically to the best candidates according to the points earned in the course of admission) as well as small monthly performance scholarships.

### **(iii) Scholarships in smart specialisation growth areas**

While this scholarship is open to students independent of their citizenship, it is worth mentioning here. The smart specialisation growth areas in Estonia have been laid down in the Estonian Research and Development and Innovation Strategy 2014-2020 "Knowledge-based Estonia" and Estonian Entrepreneurship Growth Strategy 2014-2020. These areas are:

1. information and communication technologies (ICT) related to other areas of economy (e. g. cybersecurity, software development or the use of ICT for automating industrial processes);
2. health technologies and services (e. g. the use of biotechnology or IT for the development of medical services or products);
3. more effective use of resources (e. g. entrepreneurs active in the areas of materials science or industry, endeavour to identify innovative construction options or seek opportunities for the more effective utilisation of oil shale in the chemical industry).

The scholarships in the smart specialisation growth areas have been established with the aim to increase the number of students graduating from university with degrees in these sectors, contribute to growth of research-intensive industry sector and support cooperation between R&D institutions and companies. The scholarship will be available from 2015 to 2023.

For BA and MA students the amount is 160 euros per month are allocated twice a year for 5 months at a time (from September to January and from February to June). The recipients are determined by the HEIs according to their internal procedures and deadlines. The smart specialisation scholarships for PhD students amount to 440 euros per months. Smart specialisation PhD scholarship is paid in addition to the doctoral grant (in 2018 660 EUR per month) paid by the government.

### **(iv) Scholarships provided by private donators**

Those scholarships (for example, take a look at this [list](#)) normally support selected international students in study programmes that are linked to their field of activity. E.g. LHV Bank Scholarship for ICT students designed to encourage students graduating from ICT courses to use their skills and knowledge outside of the ICT sector. Usually this type of scholarship are awarded only once and the amount is no more than few thousand euros.

**Q5c. Are there any other financial incentives or financial support** (e.g. loans, tax benefits, etc.) in place?

- Yes, provided by the state.
- Yes, provided by HEIs.
- Yes, provided by private entities.
- No.

If you have answered yes, please elaborate by giving 1-2 examples:

#### **Student loan**

International students can apply for a student loan if they hold a long-term residence permit and the duration of his/her studies according to the study programme is at least six months.

#### **Needs-based study allowance**

The aim of needs-based study allowance is to provide assistance to students, who come from the lower income families and whose households are unable to support them, motivate them to study full time and complete a curriculum during nominal period of study. Amounts of the needs-based study allowance are divided as follows: EUR 75, 135 and 220. Being qualified to any of the amounts of the allowance depends on the average income of the student and their family members. The family's average income is calculated on the basis of the taxable income.



### **Special-needs student grant**

*The grant is available for the student with special needs in the amount of 60 to 510 euros. The amount of the grant depends on the type and severity of the disability. The application process takes place via the Archimedes Foundation twice a year.*

#### **Q5d. Are any incentives with regard to family reunification in place?**

- Do family members of international students have access to family reunification in your Member State?

Yes.

No.

- If yes, do family members have the right to work in your Member State?

Yes.

No.

*If you have answered yes, please explain:*

*A foreigner who is studying in Estonian HEI, may invite his/her family members (spouse and children). Family members have right to employment.*

*Spouses that came to Estonia with visa are exempted from the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund permit requirement. However, they have to fulfil the salary criterion (at least Estonian average gross monthly salary) as well as register their working at the Police and Border Guard Board.*

*Spouses that have a residence permit are also exempted from the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund permit requirement. Furthermore, they do not have to fulfil the abovementioned salary criteria that is relevant for spouses that came with a visa.*

**Q5e.** Is any support targeted at **spouses and other family members of international students** offered in your Member State (e.g. counselling spouses to find employment, continue their education or engage in voluntary work, social and networking activities for spouses, help with enrolling children in kindergartens/schools)? *Please select all boxes that apply.*

Yes, support for spouses available.

Yes, support for children available.

Yes, support for other family members available (please specify which family members this includes when elaborating below).

No.

*From Autumn 2018 [International House in Estonia](#) provides spouses and partners of an international specialist working in Estonia [International Spouse Career Counselling Service](#) to help them learn more about oneself, adapt to change and make informed choices in order to start or continue education and work life in Estonia. The counsellor helps to design a path towards working life in Estonia and gives counselling on the following:*

- *Analysis of personality traits to help you be more aware of your strengths and better understand your development needs.*
- *Identifying necessary skills for work (including Estonian language and other professional skills), employment or profession choices, including entrepreneurship opportunities.*
- *Identifying learning needs based on the skills and knowledge required for the local labour market.*
- *Assistance in acquiring suitable learning opportunities (in-service training, additional education) including the introduction of services and benefits of the Public Employment Service.*
- *Developing short-term or long-term career plans.*
- *Qualifications and cultural differences in the Estonian workplace.*

*Public Employment Office's six specialised career counsellors for international spouses are accessible:*

- *By appointment at the Public Employment Office (Töötukassa) – more personalised service*
- *By email*
- *By phone*
- *Via Skype*

*This service is for free.*

**Q5f. Are courses offered in English/other languages than the national language(s)?**

Yes.

No.

*If you have answered yes, please elaborate:*

*According to Estonian Education Information System, in September 2018 there are 15 Bachelor programmes in English, 14 programmes for Professional Higher Education in English, 2 integrated curricula of Bachelor's and Master's study programmes in English and 75 Master programmes in English in Estonian HEIs. All 69 Doctoral programmes are taught partly or fully in English.*

*In September 2018 there is also 1 Bachelor programme in Russian, 13 programmes for Professional Higher Education in Russian, and 2 Master programmes in Russian in Estonian HEIs.*

*As for the opportunities to study Estonian for free, the Police and Border Guard Board is sending an alien who has been granted a residence permit or whose residence permit has been extended to participate in the adaptation program (Aliens Act, §1211). Adaptation program includes [beginners language training](#) (level A1). It is for free.*

*International students also have the possibility to take Estonian language courses as an elective subject within their curriculum in most HEIs.*

**Q5g. Are there any incentives from the state for HEIs providing courses in other languages?**

Yes.

No.

*If you have answered yes, please elaborate:*

*While there can be no tuition fee for students that are enrolled in degree programmes taught in Estonian language, HEIs can and normally do set tuition fees for studying degree programmes in foreign languages. Thus, latter is an incentive for universities to provide programmes and courses in foreign languages (Universities Act § 13<sup>2</sup> p 1 (<https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/528122016005/consolide>)).*

*Moreover, the amount of government support to Estonian HEIs takes into account among other indicators internationalisation of HEIs. Thus, the more foreigners, the higher the state allocated budget to HEIs (Ministerial order: <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/131122016048>).*

**Q5h. Is there a possibility for a fast-track application for visa/residence permits?**

Yes.

No.

*If you have answered yes, please elaborate:*

*There is no fast-track system in place in Estonia. However, the system is quick. Students can arrive to Estonia on the basis of short- or long-term visa and apply for residence permit in Estonia and start studying immediately after their arrival. So they do not need to wait abroad to be granted a residence permit.*

**Q5i. Are any other incentives not listed above in place?**

If applicable, please describe any other incentives in place not mentioned above.

*Answer:*

*Besides Estonian immigration system's liberal approach towards spouses of foreign students and their right to work (see answers to questions Q5d-Q5e), another peculiarity worth mentioning here is its favourable legal approach towards PhDs. PhDs from any country may be granted temporary residence permit for settling permanently in Estonia (validity up to 5 years, may be extended for up to 10 years at a time).*

*Foreigners applying for temporary residence permit for studying in Estonia have to meet the general conditions as well as supplementary conditions of the issue of a temporary residence permit to an alien. General conditions are outlined in the Aliens Act § 117. 'Conditions of issue of temporary residence permit'. They include the following requirements:*

*1) the purpose of application for the Estonian temporary residence permit is justified;*

2) the actual place of residence is Estonia;

3) sufficient legal income which would enable an alien and the family members of an alien the subsistence in Estonia;

4) a medical expenses insurance contract.

The supplementary conditions for the issue of a temporary residence permit on a specific basis have been provided for in § 210<sup>1</sup> (2) in the Aliens Act:

The temporary residence permit for settling permanently in Estonia may be issued also to an alien, who holds a doctorate degree, provided that the compliance of the document attesting higher education of an alien with the doctorate degree has been assessed on the basis of subsection 281(2) of the Republic of Estonia Education Act pursuant to the conditions and procedure established by a regulation of the Government of the Republic for the assessment and academic recognition of documents attesting education completed in a foreign state and for the use of a title of qualification acquired in the educational system of a foreign state by an agency competent to assess foreign and cross-border qualifications that enable access to higher education and attestation thereof.

After 5 years in stay in Estonia with a temporary residence permit for settling permanently in Estonia, a PhD owner qualifies for a residence permit for long-term (permanent) residents which gives better opportunities for migrating to and working in the EU MSs, and is a track to Estonian citizenship. However, an additional condition - Estonian language proficiency at least at the elementary level (B1) has to be acquired.

### **2.3 Hosting international students: preparation, arrival and housing**

**Q6a.** What is the nature of the document issued (long-stay visa or residence permit)? Please indicate the type and length of the residence permit. Please select all relevant boxes.

Long-stay visa issued in the third country:

(1) A long-stay visa may be issued to an alien for single or multiple temporary stay in Estonia.

(2) A long-stay visa may be issued with a period of validity up to twelve months (Aliens Act § 60).

Residence permit issued (please specify the type and length of the permit):

A temporary residence permit is issued with the period of validity of up to five years (Aliens Act § 119 (1)).

Other (please specify):

The type of document issued depends on the type of document a foreigner applies for. Latter normally depends on the length of study period.

- If your Member State issues a residence permit, is this issued in the territory of your Member State or in the third country?

Residence permit issued in the third country:

Residence permit issued in the territory of the Member State. If so, do you issue a long-stay visa in the third country first (yes/no)?:

Residence permit may be applied for and issued on the territory in the third country as well as on the territory of Estonia. In the latter case there needs to be a legal base to arrive in Estonia (e.g. visa free travel, short or long term visa).

**Q6b.** What are **processing times for visa/residence permit applications** for third-country nationals in your Member State (minimum, maximum and average)?

Please elaborate: Average time for processing residence permits is around 40 days. Maximum proceeding time for residence permits is 2 months. Processing time for visas is generally considerably shorter.

**Q6c.** What are the main requirements for the **renewal of a residence permit** for international students (e.g. does the student need to prove his/her attendance in HEI courses or is the study progress measured)?

Please explain: Student needs to submit an application of renewal of the residence permit, and a photo. (s)he also needs to give biometric data (fingerprints). A relevant HEI has to send to immigration authority a written confirmation that the student continues studying in that HEI.

**Q7.** Please indicate if the **hosting initiatives and measures** listed below (Q7a-Q7e) are in place in your Member State. Please state which institution is responsible for these measures.

**Q7a. Is induction and orientation support provided in your Member State** (incl. opening a bank account, registering in the healthcare system, etc.)? *Please select all relevant boxes.*

Yes, state-organised measures for support in place.

Yes, support provided by HEIs.

No.

*If you have answered yes, please elaborate on the support measures provided:*

*Most Estonian HEIs organise some form of Orientation Week or Orientation Days for new incoming students. The bigger HEIs also have a buddy system, where a new international student is provided with a local Estonian student who will help him/her with finding his/her way around and understanding how the university life works.*

*Study in Estonia has put together a small booklet called the Survival Guide, which is distributed to all incoming international degree students and which contains all the necessary information on topics such as how to register your place of residence, how to open a bank account, how to find a general practitioner, how the transportation system works, etc.*

*While the [International House of Estonia's](#) main target group is specialists who come to Estonia for work purposes, international students are also assisted as they are also potential specialist that can transfer from studying to working. International House of Estonia gathers different public service providers into one-roof in order to improve the access to services. One of these services is the [Welcoming Programme](#), carried by the Ministry of Interior. The Welcoming Programme is comprised of different modules that inform and instruct the foreigner in different areas, including opening a bank account, registering in healthcare, etc. Furthermore, counselling by the Integration Foundation and the City of Tallinn will be offered in the premises of the International House of Estonia, should a foreigner have further questions in any topics.*

**Q7b. Is support with finding housing and accommodation** provided in your Member State? Please select all boxes that apply.

Yes, state-organised measures for support in place.

Yes, support provided by HEIs.

Yes, support provided by other organisations.

No, support not available.

*If you have answered yes, please elaborate on the type of support provided:*

*HEIs can help with accommodation and housing; various universities have agreements with real estate companies, some universities have their own student residences.*

*Housing is an important issue and while [International House of Estonia](#) does not find apartments or housing for the international students or workers, they will keep a list of real-state brokers that provide services in English.*

**Q7c. Are preparatory courses (incl. language courses, orientation courses, multicultural sessions, intercultural awareness/diversity courses)** offered in your Member State?

Yes, state-organised measures for courses in place.

Yes, courses provided by HEIs.

Yes, support provided by other organisations.

No.

*If you have answered yes, please elaborate on the courses provided:*

*In order to support foreign nationals who have migrated to Estonia to settle in and to acquire the primary knowledge and skills, Estonia offers all new arrivals the opportunity to participate in [Welcoming Programme](#). The Welcoming Programme is aimed at foreign nationals who have legally resided in Estonia for less than 5 years. It consists of various informative and interactive training modules: a basic module that gives an overview of the functioning principles of Estonian state, society, culture and people, rights and obligations of residents, public services etc.; additional thematic modules that give an overview of working and entrepreneurship, family life, studying and research; separate training modules for children and young people under the age of 15 and for beneficiaries of international protection. The programme also includes beginners language training (level A1). The*

programme is free of charge and offered in English and Russian in Tallinn, Tartu and also, when there is interest, in Narva.

As for Estonian HEIs, they organise orientation week/days for accepted international students which usually take place in the last weeks of August before the semester starts. It is an opportunity to obtain practical information about the university and about Estonia (study system, courses in English, residence permit, health care, services for students, accommodation, student organisations, tour of the campus, intercultural communication). (For Tallinn University's accepted students the participation is compulsory).

Some HEIs also offer an English language preparatory year, where international students can work on their English skills and already get to know to the local culture and way of life. The preparatory year is with a tuition fee.

**Q7d.** If applicable, please describe **any other hosting initiatives and measures not mentioned above.**

Please elaborate: Noting significant to point out.

## 2.4 Rights of international students

### **Q8. Right to work**

**Q8a.** How many hours are international students allowed to work per week or months per year?<sup>24</sup>

[Possible visual element to be included in Synthesis report: map indicating the number of hours in each Member State.]

Please elaborate:

An alien who has been issued a residence permit for study may take employment in Estonia without a specific permit on condition that such employment does not interfere with the studies (Aliens Act § 175).

It is the same for students who are studying on basis of visa.

Students who use mobility as described in the Directive 2016/801 and are studying in Estonia on the basis of a visa or a residence permit issued by the first Member State, may work with the same conditions as Estonian students (provided that the employment does not interfere with the studies). No specific limitations for work hours per week or per other period have been set for incoming students.

**Q8b.** Are any restrictions in place in your Member State in terms of the **type/field of work international students** are allowed to work in?

Yes, restrictions in place.

No.

If you have answered yes, please elaborate on the type of restrictions in place:

No, except of Estonian citizenship requirement for public servants.

**Q8c.** Do students need to obtain **prior authorisation** for the right to work in accordance with national law?

Yes, prior authorisation required.

No.

If you have answered yes, please elaborate on the purpose of this prior authorisation and the entity responsible for granting it:

**Q8d.** Are international students entitled to exercise **self-employed economic activity**?

Yes, self-employment possible.

No.

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<sup>24</sup> See Article 24 of the Students and Researchers Directive.

If you have answered yes, please elaborate on the regulations in place:

TCN students can exercise self-employed economic activity in the same manner Estonian citizens can.

**Q9.** Do students have the right to **carry out in parallel to their studies or defer their studies for a training or a job** in the Member State?

- Yes, deferral of studies possible.
- Yes, carrying out a training/job in parallel to studies possible.
- No.

If you have answered yes, please elaborate on the regulations in place:

An alien who has been issued a residence permit for study may take employment in Estonia without a specific permit on condition that such employment does not interfere with the studies (Aliens Act § 175).

**Q10a.** Do students have to **complete their studies within a maximum period of time**?

- Yes.
- No.

If you have answered yes, please indicate the period:

Aliens Act (§ 170. 'Period of validity of temporary residence permit for study') stipulates:

- (1) A temporary residence permit for study may be issued to an alien with a period of validity until the end of the nominal study period but for no longer than the estimated duration of studies
- (2) A temporary residence permit for study may be extended until the end of the nominal study period or, if the nominal study period has terminated, until the end of the estimated duration of studies.

**Q10b.** In accordance with Directive 2016/801 Article 21(3),<sup>25</sup> Member states may withdraw a visa/residence permit in case of a lack of progress in the relevant studies. Has your Member State transposed this provision?

- Yes.
- No.

If you have answered yes, please elaborate on how the lack of progress is assessed by your Member State:

Sufficient progress means fulfilment the curriculum on the level, set by HEI in order to continue study in the HEI.

**Q11.** Do the **number of years** an international student possesses a residence permit for the purpose of studying count towards being granted access to long-term residence or citizenship?

- Yes.
- No

If you have answered yes, please elaborate on the regulations in place:

The period of the stay in Estonia on the basis of a temporary residence permit for study shall be taken into account in half in the calculations of the period of stay required for the issue of a residence permit for a long-term resident if an alien has been issued a residence permit on another basis late. (Aliens Act, § 233. (2)).

### External factors affecting attracting international students

**Q12.** Based on existing national sources (evaluation reports, media reports, etc.), what are the **external factors** affecting the attraction of international students in your Member State? Please select all relevant boxes.

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<sup>25</sup> See Article 21(2)(f) of the Students and Researchers Directive

- HEI rankings
- Member State is a hub for specific fields
- Language in which courses are taught
- Culture
- Socio-economic factors (e.g. living costs)
- Other (please specify): *A small, not so well known study migration destination; not the richest of countries with an unknown language and harsh climate.*
- No information available.

*Please elaborate:*

### 2.5 Challenges and good practices in attracting international students

**Q13.** What are the (a) **challenges** and (b) **good practices** that have been observed in your Member State on attracting international students and for whom is it considered a challenge/good practice (HEI, Member State, student, other)? For each challenge/good practice: why is this considered a challenge/good practice and is this based on input from experts (if so, which experts)/surveys/evaluation reports/interviews/other?

a) Challenges:

*Please elaborate:*

*As a small country Estonia is facing the challenge of providing quality support service for international students during their studies and supporting them in finding career possibilities and staying in the country (retaining talents in the country).*

b) Good practices:

*Please elaborate:*

#### Study in Estonia

*To begin with, the national initiative Study in Estonia together with Estonian HEIs has been really efficient and remarkable in promoting Estonia as a valued study destination in Europe. According to the Estonian Education Information System, last academic year (2017/2018), Estonia hosted nearly 4,300 international degree students, more than 1,700 exchange students and around 400 participants of summer or winter schools. Ten years ago the situation was totally different. Estonia had a little more than 700 incoming Erasmus students and less than 900 international degree students in the year 2007. The number of international degree students in Estonia has almost quintupled from around 900 in 2008/09 to around 4,300 in 2017/18. Furthermore, Archimedes Foundation, that includes Study in Estonia, is now part of the European Commission's initiative Study in Europe and helps to enhance the attractiveness of European higher education in the world (for further information on this development see: <http://estonianworld.com/business/estonian-foundation-wins-procurement-to-promote-europe-as-a-study-destination/> ).*

#### **Government funding of HEIs in Estonia supports internationalisation**

*Out of 6 performance funding indicators 2 (altogether 20% of performance funding) are related to internationalisation:*

- 1. Share of enrolled foreign students, 10%*
  - 2. Share of students participating in short time international mobility, 10%*
- This funding system incentivises HEIs to recruit more international students.*

#### DreamApply

*As for more concrete developments to share with other MSs, DreamApply, a specialised international student application management platform launched in 2011 by Estonians should be highlighted. It is at the same time a student application management as well as marketing management tool offering paperless modern solutions to more than 200 education institutions in 25 countries. All Estonian HEIs are represented on the platform and most use it as an admission environment.*

*DreamApply supports admission from the moment a potential applicant becomes interested in the institution until the student starts his/her studies in the institution. It can handle applications for full-time degree students or short courses such as summer schools. It is promised by the developers of this tool that using DreamApply makes applicants happy with smooth communication flow. It also saves considerable amount of administrative time on admission process, and gives HEIs detailed information and statistics about admission processes. As a marketing management platform DreamApply is the only product in field of education where HEIs can track potential candidates from the moment they become interested until they are enrolled at a HEI.*

## Section 3. Measures and incentives to **retain** international graduates

### 3.1. Measures and incentives for the retention of international graduates.

*This section examines the measures and incentives to retain international graduates after their studies in place in the Member States. Statistics provided in Annex 1.4 and Annex 1.5 will be used to contextualise the measures and incentives reported on by Member States.*

**NB:** *in your answers to Q14-16, if applicable, please indicate whether the policy/offer/strategy differs between qualification levels (ISCED levels 5-8).*

**Q14.** Measures and incentives to **retain** international graduates in Member States.

**Q14a.** What are the conditions for **access after study** to national labour market/ self-employment/ start up or spin-off activities/ research project?

*Please briefly outline the conditions:*

- For what period of time does your Member State allow students to stay after studies in order to seek employment or set up a business?<sup>26</sup> What happens after this period?

*While in general, foreigners are allowed to stay in Estonia for another 90 days after the expiry of the validity of their residence permit, in order to apply for a new residence permit, foreigners who have obtained a residence permit for studying may stay in Estonia **for up to 270 days after the expiry of the validity of their residence permit** in order to seek employment here and apply for a residence permit on new grounds. If the foreigner finds work during the additional period of stay and submits an application for a residence permit, he or she does not have to leave the country and can stay in Estonia until a decision is made on the residence permit application. Those students may commence their employment in **the same conditions as EE inhabitants** (without any requirement for the minimum income established for foreigners or permission from the unemployment fund, etc.) ((Aliens Act § 43(5), §181(1) 11)).*

*Please elaborate:*

- Does your Member State have any restrictions in place regarding the job field in which the international student can seek employment or set up a business?

Yes.

No.

*If you have answered yes, please elaborate on the restrictions in place:*

- Does the international student require a minimum level of degree in order to be allowed to stay after studies in order to seek employment or set up a business?<sup>27</sup>

Yes.

No.

*If you have answered yes, please indicate the minimum level required:*

*(In order to be allowed to stay in Estonia a student has to have a diploma proving his or her vocational education in Estonia at the fourth or fifth level of vocational training or a diploma proving higher*

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<sup>26</sup> See Article 25(1) of the Students and Researchers Directive

<sup>27</sup> See Article 25(2) of the Students and Researchers Directive



education in professional higher education or Bachelor's studies, in the studies based on integrated curricula of Bachelor's and Master's studies, in Master's or Doctoral studies).

**Q14b.** Are there any other particular **policy measures** or incentives to retain international students in place? Please select all relevant boxes:

- Lowered salary requirement for a work/residence permit.
- Unrestricted access to the labour market.
- Other incentive(s).
- No.

If you have answered yes, please briefly elaborate on the measures or incentives in place.

In order to encourage foreign students and researchers to stay in Estonia, a number of amendments have been made to the legislation to simplify the process of **applying for a visa and residence permit**, to facilitate the **bringing of family members to Estonia** and to facilitate **their entry to the labour market** (see also answers to questions Q5d-Q5e).

Estonia has established an immigration quota which limits the number of foreign workers coming to Estonia. However, foreigners who have come to study in Estonia and wish to stay here to work are exempt from this. The **exemption from the quota** also applies if the foreigner leaves Estonia and then returns to Estonia to apply for a new residence permit. For instance, a foreigner may study in Estonia for a year or two on the basis of a residence permit for studying, return to his or her homeland to complete the studies and then come to Estonia to work here.

In order to protect Estonian labour and prevent the inflow of so-called cheap labour, the law prescribes a requirement pursuant to which employers have to pay foreigners at least the Estonian average monthly gross salary. Employers also have to obtain a permit from the Unemployment Insurance Fund to employ a foreigner. Before granting such a permit, the Unemployment Insurance Fund checks whether the vacancy could be filled with an Estonian citizen, a European Union citizen or a foreigner already living in Estonia, who meet the qualification and specialisation requirements established for the job. In order to facilitate the staying of foreigners who have graduated a school here, **an exemption has been made to the salary criterion and the Unemployment Insurance Fund permit requirement** for foreigners who have obtained a level four or five vocational education in Estonia in vocational studies or have obtained a higher education in professional higher education studies or studies based on integrated study programmes of bachelor's and master's studies or in master's studies or doctoral studies.

Work in Estonia team has had constant feedback from its clients that the stay of international specialists that come to Estonia with their spouses or partners depends also on professional inclusion of spouses /partners in the Estonian society and labour market. Thus, International house in Estonia has developed **International Spouse Career Counselling Service** to promote the attraction and retention of foreign specialists (please see also answer to Q5e above).

**Work in Estonia** in cooperation with **Study in Estonia** is conducting work fairs and bringing together employees with foreign students. Work in Estonia is constantly informing Estonian companies about the international students in Estonia as a potential high qualified employees (see e.g. <https://www.workinestonia.com/for-employers/international-students-in-estonia/>).

**Q15.** Are there **initiatives of HEIs or the private sector** whereby support is provided to students following the completion of their studies? (e.g. in specialised or niche areas, in the form of counselling, contract with students to commence work with a company after the completion of their studies). Please also consider initiatives at a regional level. Please select all relevant boxes and if applicable, please provide best practice examples of the initiatives of universities/HEIs, private sector, local governments, etc. in the retention of international graduates (e.g. in specialised and niche areas, in the form of scholarships, apprenticeship contracts, counselling, etc.).

- Yes, initiatives implemented by HEIs.
- Yes, initiatives implemented by the private sector.
- Other initiatives.
- No.

If you have answered yes, please elaborate and provide 1-2 examples of best practices:

**'International Marketing Strategy of Estonian Higher Education 2015-2020'** commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Research has a section 'Internship and employment opportunities for foreign students', which states that actions will be directed towards employers to raise their awareness of the conditions of offering employment or internship opportunities for foreign students and the potential benefits thereof, publicly recognising the best employers that offer foreign students internships, and encouraging employers' mutual exchange of best practice.

It is planned that those actions will be carried out in cooperation with Enterprise Estonia, the Estonian Employers Confederation, the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other employers' organisations in order to foster the foreign students' awareness about work and internship opportunities, encourage foreign students and employers to make contact and to contribute to the implementation of the action plan of Work in Estonia.

As for autumn 2018, Study in Estonia has organised together with Work in Estonia and universities, several career fairs for students to find internship spots or jobs.

### **"Shadowing an employee" day for foreign students**

The Estonian Employers' Confederation has been organising a day when foreign students studying in Estonian HEIs can shadow employees of a variety of companies for several years now. Students send statements of motivation to the Employers' Confederation with their information (field of studies, country of origin etc.). Employers who have chosen to participate in this initiative choose the suitable applicants and the time to welcome them. Then students visit companies and shadow employees of the companies during their work day. Students will be introduced to companies' operation and, if possible, the rules of internship. This initiative benefits Estonian employers, because foreign students bring new ideas and contacts to the team. Exporting companies, for example, can find new employees who know specific foreign languages and target markets that those companies are interested in. Applications from foreign students and Estonian companies to parttake this initiative are welcomed all the year round.

### **A competition to recognise the company providing the best internship experience for foreign students**

With this competition, the Estonian Employers' Confederation recognises companies operating in Estonia that have considerably supported the work practice of foreign students. Foreign students studying in Estonian HEIs may experience difficulties in finding apprenticeships, and therefore the Employers' Confederation recognises those Estonian companies that have accepted the challenge to provide them high-quality internship experience. Internships can play an important role in young people's career. HEIs are invited to nominate applicants by filling in a questionnaire (on the quality and quantity of internships offered by the nominee the previous year) and sending it to the Employers' Confederation. The laureate of the competition receives the right to use a specially designed tag on his website and publications referring to its excellence in providing students internship experiences.

**Q16.** Does your government and/or HEIs implement any strategies in your Member State to **encourage former international graduates** (i.e. international alumni who have already left the Member State) to establish and/or maintain a connection to the national labour market)? *Please select all relevant boxes.*

- Yes, strategy implemented by HEIs.
- Yes, strategy implemented by the government.
- No.

*If you have answered yes, please elaborate on the main elements of the strategy:*

It is planned at the 'International Marketing Strategy of Estonian Higher Education 2015-2020' that an alumni-based network of the representatives of Estonian higher education trademark will be created to promote Estonia and its diverse possibilities for self-realization and higher education at the selected target markets.

However, the trademark process is still in progress. It is foreseen in the strategy, but the outputs of the concept of ambassadors are not yet in place.

## **3.2 Challenges and good practices in retaining international students**

**Q17.** What are the (a) **challenges** and (b) **good practices** that have been observed in your Member State on retaining international students and for whom is it considered a challenge/good practice (HEIs,

Member State, student, other)? For each challenge/good practice: why is this considered a challenge/good practice and is this based on input from experts (if so, which experts)/studies/evaluation reports/surveys/interviews/other? Please briefly summarise the input and findings of these experts/studies/evaluation reports/interviews/other.

#### A) Challenges:

*Please elaborate:*

*Despite shortage of labour it has not been easy to facilitate TCN students' entry to Estonian labour market. One challenge is foreign students' and graduates' less than perfect Estonian skills. English language programmes have not been successful enough in teaching Estonian, which is typically the language used in Estonian predominantly small and medium size enterprises. Employers are generally rather reluctant to switch their organisations' communication from Estonian to English. Yet, language is not restriction in international organisations and some internationally oriented IT companies, that operate in English.*

#### B) Good practices:

*Please elaborate:*

##### **Facilitated access to the labour market**

*In Estonia TCN students do not need a work permit, and they are allowed to work without any time limit on condition that employment does not interfere with their studies. After graduation from Estonian HEIs foreigners may stay in the country up to 270 days in order to seek employment and apply for a residence permit on new grounds. If the foreigner finds work and submits an application for a residence permit, he or she does not have to leave the country until a decision is made on the residence permit application. Moreover, the normal rate of remuneration (average gross monthly salary of Estonia) does not apply to TCN graduates of Estonian HEIs. They are also exempted from immigration quota. The exemption from the quota applies even when they leave Estonia and return to Estonia later and apply for a new residence permit.*

##### **Very favourable conditions for foreign PhDs to settle in Estonia**

*PhDs from any country may be granted temporary residence permit for settling permanently in Estonia (validity up to 5 years, may be extended for up to 10 years at a time) given that they fulfil the conditions of the issue of such permit (e.g. PhD degree is confirmed by the ENIC-NARIC; the actual place of residence is Estonia; sufficient legal income; medical expenses insurance contract).*

*After 5 years of stay in Estonia with a temporary residence permit for settling permanently in Estonia, a PhD owner qualifies for a residence permit for long-term (permanent) residents. Latter permit gives better opportunities for migrating to and working in other EU MSs, and is a track to Estonian citizenship. However, an additional condition - Estonian language proficiency at least at the elementary level (B1), has to be obtained first.*

##### **"Orientation year" at the Narva College of the University of Tartu**

*This college situated at the Eastern corner of Estonia has piloted "Estonian Language year" programme for two admission rounds (2017 and 2018). Basically, highly motivated students from the former Soviet Union countries (e.g. Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Moldova, and Ukraine) are enrolled in three undergraduate programmes and one integrated BA-MA programme to compensate for the shrinking local recruitment base.*

*Attracting international students is a way to increase the number of individuals genuinely interested in studying in the college and getting a profession in areas that are important for Estonia. Following one-year length intense Estonian language studies those that pass B1 language test switch next autumn to their chosen study programmes that are taught in Estonian. (All Estonian language programmes are free of charge in Estonia, independent of the citizenship of students).*

*While some of the graduates plan to move forward, most are interested in staying in the area, and building up a life in Estonia. They have already invested an extra year to learn Estonian, and a large proportion of the students are enrolled in teacher training programmes, which is rather country specific. Thus, Narva may considerably benefits from the programme.*

*Narva College plans to monitor alumni's professional and personal progress after they graduate.*

*Organisers of that pilot project emphasise that HEIs that would like to try out a similar orientation year should pay special effort in finding the most motivated hard working students. Besides, the whole staff*

*should pay additional attention to the psychological adaptation of foreign students (interview with the International Relations Specialist at Narva College of University of Tartu, 13.11.2018).*

**Free of charge migration advisors service**

*Foreign students in Estonia may need personal and reliable legal advice on staying in the country after the end of their studies. Therefore, the Police and Border Guard Board, with support from the European Social Fund, offer migration-related counselling on following issues: settling to live in Estonia; working; and entrepreneurship.*

*Migration advisors also invite entrepreneurs, businesses, organisations and individuals to counselling, who wish to: invite foreigners to Estonia or hire foreigners in Estonia.*

*The service is offered in Estonian, Russian and English, and it is free of charge.*

## Section 4: Bilateral and multilateral cooperation with third countries

**Q18.** Has your Member State concluded and/or intends to conclude any **bilateral and/or multilateral agreements** with countries of origin concerning international students? Please distinguish between agreements in place with countries with developed economies and those with developing economies<sup>28</sup> as classified by the United Nations<sup>29</sup> and summarise and provide an overview of the type of agreements – without listing all the agreements and detailed provisions.

*[Possible visual element to be included in the Synthesis report: map indicating the regions/countries of origin with which agreements are in place.]*

Yes, bilateral/multilateral agreements in place or planned with industrialised countries. *Please elaborate on the aspects listed below):*

- The most common provisions of the agreements - *Student and higher education staff short-term mobility.*
- Most common world regions/countries of origin with which agreements have been concluded - *North-America.*
- Are specific fields of studies or qualification levels covered in the agreements? - *No.*
- Are specific categories of persons covered under the agreements? (e.g. specific age groups; gender; other socio-demographic characteristics). - *No.*

Yes, bilateral/multilateral agreements in place or planned with developing countries. *Please elaborate on the aspects listed below):*

- The most common provisions of the agreements;
- Most common world regions/countries of origin with which agreements have been concluded;
- Are specific fields of studies or qualification levels covered in the agreements?
- Are specific categories of persons covered under the agreements? (e.g. specific age groups; gender; other socio-demographic characteristics).

No bilateral/multilateral agreements in place or planned.

**Q19.** Are there any measures or incentives in place to avoid **brain drain** in the country of origin when attracting and retaining international students?

Yes, measures related to brain drain in place.

No.

*If you have answered yes, please elaborate on the measures in place:*

**Q20.** Do HEIs in your Member States have **initiatives and cooperation agreements with HEIs** in third countries in place? If so, what types of agreements and for which purpose (e.g. student exchange programmes)? *If there are many different agreements in place, please only provide 1-2 examples of agreements in place.*

Yes.

No.

*If you have answered yes, please elaborate on the initiatives/cooperation agreements in place and provide 1-2 examples:*

*Some of the universities have programmes for student and staff exchange with partner organisations, in order to exchange knowledge and learn from the best practices.*

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<sup>28</sup> This distinction is relevant as the objectives and purpose of such agreements could differ significantly between these two categories.

<sup>29</sup> [http://unctadstat.unctad.org/EN/Classifications/DimCountries\\_DevelopmentStatus\\_Hierarchy.pdf](http://unctadstat.unctad.org/EN/Classifications/DimCountries_DevelopmentStatus_Hierarchy.pdf)

**Q21.** What are the (a) **challenges** and (b) **good practices** that have been observed in your Member State with regard to bilateral and multilateral agreements and for whom is this considered a challenge/good practice (HEIs, Member State, student, other)? For each challenge/good practice, why is it considered a challenge/good practice and is this based on input from experts (if so, which experts)/studies/evaluation reports/surveys/interviews/other? Please briefly summarise the input and findings of these experts/studies/evaluation reports/interviews/other

A) Challenges:

*Please elaborate:*

*The main challenge is to guarantee that both Member States accept and agree equal amount of students and HEI staff in exchange and covering their costs, etc.*

B) Good practices:

*Please elaborate:*

*The cooperation between HEI's has created an excellent opportunity for students and HEI staff to exchange information regularly that could help HEI's with development of curriculum or in the field of research and development. Also, exchange of personnel (students/staff) is contributing in the learning process on the individual level.*