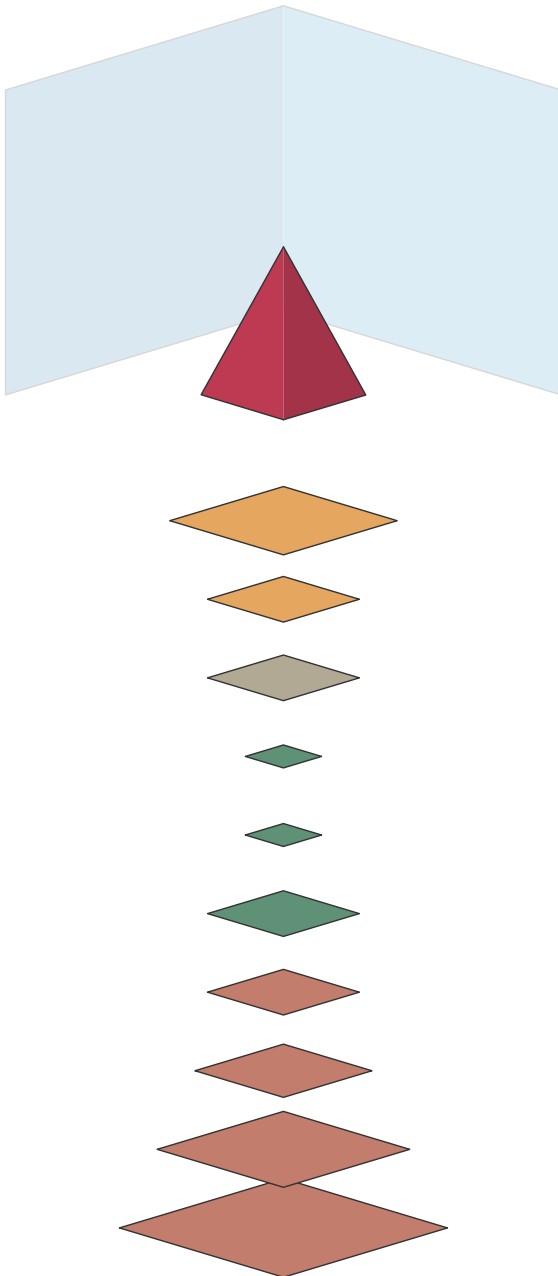


# ESTONIA



## 3.60 CRIMINALITY SCORE

163<sup>rd</sup> of 193 countries  
35<sup>th</sup> of 44 European countries  
4<sup>th</sup> of 8 Northern European countries



### CRIMINAL MARKETS 3.45

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	4.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	3.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	3.00
FLORA CRIMES	1.50
FAUNA CRIMES	1.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	3.00
HEROIN TRADE	3.00
COCAINE TRADE	3.50
CANNABIS TRADE	5.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	6.50



### CRIMINAL ACTORS 3.75

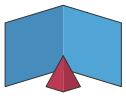
MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	3.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	2.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.00



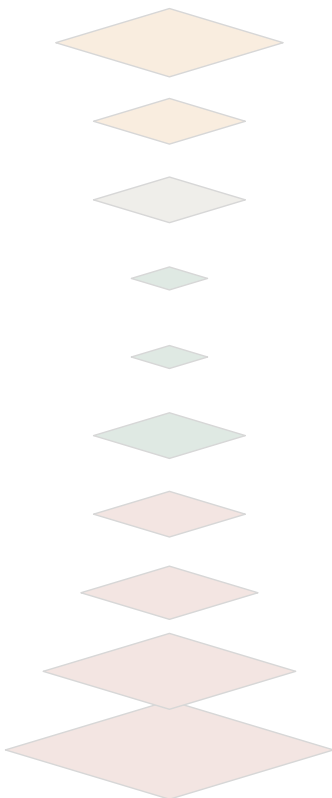
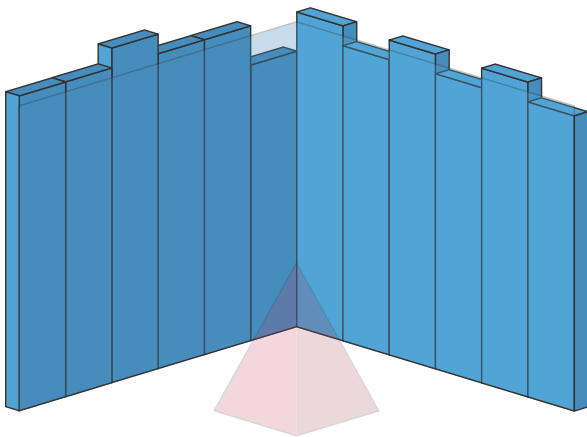
## 7.83 RESILIENCE SCORE

9<sup>th</sup> of 193 countries  
7<sup>th</sup> of 44 European countries  
5<sup>th</sup> of 8 Northern European countries





# ESTONIA



7.83

## RESILIENCE SCORE

9<sup>th</sup> of 193 countries

7<sup>th</sup> of 44 European countries

5<sup>th</sup> of 8 Northern European countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	8.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	8.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	8.50
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	8.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	8.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	7.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	8.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	7.50
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	8.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	7.50
PREVENTION	8.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	7.50



3.60

## CRIMINALITY SCORE

163<sup>rd</sup> of 193 countries

35<sup>th</sup> of 44 European countries

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**CRIMINAL MARKETS** 3.45



**CRIMINAL ACTORS** 3.75



# CRIMINALITY

## CRIMINAL MARKETS

### PEOPLE

Estonia is a destination, source and transit country for human trafficking. There are reported cases of Estonian nationals being trafficked to northern and Western European countries, mainly Finland, Germany and the UK. Victims from Asia and Europe are also trafficked for exploitation in Estonia. Most victims are from Russia, Belarus, Moldova, the Ukraine, Bulgaria and Estonia itself. Sexual exploitation appears to be the most common cause of trafficking, though there is evidence indicating that the crime market for sex trafficking is becoming smaller. At the same time, however, there is evidence that the market for labour trafficking might be increasing.

Estonia is a transit country for smuggling migrants from Russia, Georgia and Vietnam, destined for Europe. Most smuggled persons enter Estonia through the country's eastern border with Russia. Most human smugglers are members of Russian crime groups which work in tandem with Estonian networks.

### TRADE

Arms trafficking constituted a significant threat to Estonia and, throughout the 1990s, the country had a reputation as a major hotspot for illegal arms trafficking. However, efforts to curb the illegal trafficking of firearms have been effective, resulting in a sharp decline in the size of the crime market. Estonia is now mainly a destination country for illicit arms, albeit a limited one.

### ENVIRONMENT

Environment crimes are not a major concern in Estonia and criminal markets in flora and fauna are not known to exist on a large scale. Illegal forestry was a concern in the past, but Estonia now faces a low risk of harvesting illegal timber. Illegal trade in reptile skins, corals, caviar and sturgeon meat has decreased in the past years and the crime market for fauna appears to be relatively small. The country's location and history of fuel smuggling sustain some concerns with regards to the proliferation of a non-renewable resource crime market. Additionally, instances of fraud in the fuel sector have been reported. Nevertheless, the illicit non-renewable resources market has a potentially limited but manageable influence.

### DRUGS

Estonia is a transit country for heroin and a destination country for cannabis, synthetic drugs and, to a lesser extent, cocaine. It is a transit country for heroin trafficked into Europe via Russia (along the northern route). Domestic heroin consumption and trade is marginal as it has more or less been replaced first by fentanyl and, after successful action by law enforcement to combat suppliers, various synthetic drugs, including amphetamines, methamphetamines and gamma-hydroxy-butyrate (GHB). In 2020, however, something of a return of opiates, mainly fentanyl, was observed. Many of the synthetic drugs used in Estonia originate in Europe: Amphetamines and methamphetamines seized in the country often originate in Poland and the Netherlands; MDMA – also known as ecstasy or molly – is imported from the Netherlands. Fentanyl seized in Estonia often originates in China. A small proportion of Estonia's demand for synthetic drugs have been fed by domestic production and authorities have dismantled small- and medium-scale laboratories making GHB, amphetamines and fentanyl.

Cannabis is consumed relatively widely in Estonia, particularly among young people. The exact criminal actors involved in the cannabis market are unknown but, in some cases, there are reports of mafia-style groups being linked to the trade. Estonia is a destination country for cocaine, though seizures indicate a moderately small market by global and European standards.

## CRIMINAL ACTORS

Foreign groups, especially foreign mafias, have traditionally played a key role in most of Estonia's crime markets, including trafficking drugs, people and arms. Since the 1990s, mafia-style groups of Russian, Belarussian and Ukrainian origin have had a strong presence in Estonia. Ethnic Estonian mafia-style groups also exist, but clearly identifying them is for the most part a difficult task. The most widely recognized Estonian mafia organization is the Assar Paulus group, known by the name of its leader. In general, mafia-style groups in Estonia, both domestic and foreign, have traditionally exercised a great deal of coordination. For instance, a number of them have established a mutual fund – *общак* in Russian – which functions as a committee that defines territorial divisions and settles disputes. Additionally, outlaw motorcycle gangs, such as the Hells Angels and Bandidos have also had a presence in Estonia. Recent years, however, have seen several convictions and murders of some of the most powerful individuals in Estonia's crime underworld, including Nikolai Tarankov (murdered) and Assar Paulus (arrested) – two of the most influential criminals in the

country. This might have significantly weakened the unity and influence of mafia-style actors in Estonia, both foreign and domestic, effectively putting the future of the crime mutual fund into question.

Criminal networks in Estonia also appear to collaborate to some extent with foreign actors. They have grown in prominence in the past years, operating predominately in the drug trafficking market but have a stake in human

trafficking and smuggling as well. Cases involving state criminal actors mainly constitute white-collar crimes, such as money laundering and corruption. In general, rather than their involvement in violent and/or drug-related crimes, state-embedded actors seem to be working in collaboration with international organized-crime groups to launder the proceeds of their criminal activities.

# RESILIENCE

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Since independence, Estonia has become a consolidated democracy with a track record of clean elections, accountable governance and a respect for its citizens' political rights that is unrivalled in any other former Soviet country. Estonia's government has shown leadership against organized crime and has adopted a number of strategies for countering key crime markets. Although corruption remains an issue, by global standards, the country performs relatively well in the fight against it. Its oversight mechanisms are generally adequate controls against corruption, though further steps to strengthen the anti-corruption framework could be taken. Transparent governance could be strengthened in a number of key areas, including political financing, lobbying, access to information and whistle-blower protection.

Estonia has ratified all international legal instruments relevant to organized crime. The country cooperates with international partners through a range of international bodies, including Europol, INTERPOL and various regional bodies and task forces. It has participated in joint operations with foreign law enforcement and has extradition agreements with many countries, including the Russian Federation, the Ukraine, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and the US. The Estonian legal framework criminalizes most forms of organized crime. Its Criminal Code contains legal provisions to criminalize those who participate in organized crime, as well as human smuggling, human, drug and arms trafficking and fauna and flora crimes.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Estonia's courts are independent in their activities and deliver justice with reliability. Those facing charges can generally expect a fair trial and due process. There is no evidence of corruption and organized-crime activities inside Estonian prisons. There have been a few allegations of excessive use of force by prison officers, but these issues are not symptomatic of wider issues and concern specific prisons. Law enforcement in the country has high levels

of public trust and is considered relatively efficient. The Police and Border Guard Board is the main policing body, responsible for managing and coordinating the activities of various agencies of the police, including those specialized in investigating organized crime in general and units that are specialized in human trafficking, human smuggling and drug trafficking. Nevertheless, the small size of the law enforcement community in Estonia makes it hard for it to have the breadth of capabilities appropriate to respond to different types of organized crime.

## ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The economic regulatory environment in Estonia is highly conducive to doing business and to private-sector development and at providing relatively strong protection for workers. The Estonian government has legal and institutional mechanisms in place to ensure that legitimate businesses operate free from criminal activities. Even though an Estonian branch of Danske Bank was implicated in one of the largest money-laundering scandals exposed, the country has a relatively resilient anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML-CFT) framework. The country has a solid Financial Intelligence Unit and Supreme Audit Institution and relatively transparent beneficial ownership disclosure practices.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The legal framework for witness protection in Estonia gives, among other things, witnesses of organized crime an opportunity to obtain a new identity. Rehabilitation treatment of drug users is provided by the public health system, though hospitals often provide patients seeking rehabilitation with outpatient rather than inpatient treatment. In cases of human trafficking, NGOs often take the lead, providing victims with various services. These are funded by the state, though NGOs often have to look elsewhere for further funding. Reintegration and repatriation services are provided by state municipalities. However, Estonia does

not always provide victims of human trafficking with all the mechanisms needed to exit trafficking. Crime-prevention strategies have been adopted and implemented for drugs and human trafficking, but not for all crime markets. Civil society and independent media do not face any significant restrictions and are free to investigate, discuss and report on issues related to organized crime and corruption.

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