



## Estonia

The Estonian government has started to review national policies from the perspective of sustainable development and in accordance with the Agenda 21 and has integrated sustainable development within national strategies and plans. The official documents stating the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) goals are:

- **An Agenda 21 for Education in the Baltic Sea Region – Baltic 21E** for the Education sector, with an action plan for implementing was adopted by the representative of Estonian Minister of Education on 24 January 2002.
- **Estonian Strategy Research and Development- Knowledge based Estonia, 2002-2006** – adopted by the Estonian Parliament in December 2001.
- **The Estonian National Curriculum for Basic Schools and Gymnasiums** (adopted by Government in 2002) where Sustainable Development (SD) is presented as a common topic for all subjects in the basic and secondary education. This means that SD issues have to be taught in biology, geography, chemistry and physics lessons as well as in mathematics, history, local studies, music and other subjects.

In April 2004, the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Environment formed a **Working Group** to improve the content and implementation of ESD/environmental education in Estonia. In March 2005, **A common action memorandum** was signed between the Estonian Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Education and Research. As a result of this memorandum, the Ministers have agreed to jointly develop programmes for education, environment and sustainable development. The working group developed a formal, conceptual basis for environmental education and ESD, with an emphasis on curriculum development, the content and the teaching and learning process.

On 18 March, in Vilnius, the Minister of Education and Research and the Vice-Minister of Environment and Education adopted the **UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development** – a practical instrument to promote sustainable development through education. The **Vilnius Framework for Implementation** was also adopted. A **Steering Committee and Expert Group on Indicators** were set up to facilitate the coordination and review of the strategy's implementation. In May 2005, the Ministry of Education and Research nominated representatives for the Steering Committee on ESD.

### Projects/Initiatives

**"Schools for Sustainability in the Baltic States" project:** Begun in 2001 and completed in July 2003, this international two year co-operative project started in 2001 and was locally co-ordinated by the Regional Environmental Centre (REC) country offices in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. The project promoted the ideas of sustainable development among the youth. At the end of programme, an Estonian- Russian booklet of success stories from all three countries was published.

### Project Windmill

An environmental education project, Windmill (*Tuulik* in Estonian), was initiated in Spring 2001 by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Estonian Ministries of the Environment and of Education. The project aimed to help Estonian schools to implement ESD in the curriculum, and in their school work plan. This project has now been expanded to include kindergartens.

**Resources**

The Ministry of Education and Research has funded learning and teaching materials for ESD. An Internet portal with information on existing resources is also being developed. Funding has also been provided for students to participate in the Baltic Sea project, the Windmill project (learning and teaching materials) and the international GLOBE project. Staff development in ESD is a top priority, and the National Development Plan for Teachers' Pre-service and In-service was presented to the Minister for Education in December 2003. This plan includes general competencies required by teachers, as well as those required specifically for teaching and learning ESD.