

Sport & Physical Activity - Estonian Community

Basic Facts:

- The Republic of Estonia is a country in Northern Europe, bordering the Baltic Sea to the west and the Gulf of Finland to the north.
- Estonia regained its freedom on August 20, 1991, with the Singing Revolution and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Estonia eventually joined the EU in 2004.
- The capital city is Tallinn.
- The 2003 Census showed it had a population of just over 1.4 million people.
- Estonia lies on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea on the level north western part of the rising east European platform.

Demographics:

- The country's official language is Estonian, which is closely related to Finnish. Russian is also widely spoken as is English.
- According to a census undertaken in 2002, the majority of people are Estonian (67.9%) with Russians (25.6%) and Ukrainians, Finns and Belarusians making up the rest.

Immigration:

- In England there has been a long established Estonian community dating back to before the Second World War. It has three main centres in London, Leicester and Bradford with smaller communities in Nottingham and Bolton/Manchester.
- Worker Registration Figures for the period 2004-08 record that **5,461** new arrivals have come to England since Estonia joined the EU.

Health:

- Total health expenditure as a proportion of GDP was 5.5% in 2004, a rise of 0.2% from the previous year.
- The life expectancy at birth in 2006 was 73 years.
- According to OECD figures, the percentage of population considered to be obese in 2006 was 15.2% and those considered to be overweight stood at 30.5%.

Religion:

- The traditional religion is the Christian belief in the form of the Evangelical Lutheran Confession. There are also a minority of Roman Catholic, Baptist, Protestant and Jewish groups.

Physical Activity and Sport:

- Physical activity has not been seen as part of a daily lifestyle, the pre occupation having been with emphasizing and glorifying competitive sport. Recent reports (Estonian Heart Association) state that fewer than 10% of the people in Estonia get sufficient physical activity.
- The Estonian Strategic Development Plan "Sport for All 2006 - 2010" aims to promote expansion of the Sport for All movement among the population, make physical activity available for everybody and increase the facilities and possibilities for regular training. The four year plans aim is to increase activity levels by 20%.
- The most popular spectator sport is basketball. Hockey and football are also played.
- Estonians are also successful in athletics. Erki Nool won the Gold Medal for the decathlon at the Sydney Olympics. Cycling too is popular with Estonian Jaan Kirsipuu a leading international cyclist.
- Estonians are well known for cross-country skiing, especially Andrus Veerpalu and Kristiina Shmigun. Other winter sports are skating and ice-boating.
- In the recent Beijing Olympics, Estonia won two medals (gold and silver) in athletics and rowing respectively. They also won three gold medals in the 2006 Winter Olympics.
- In England, Essex Estonians Volleyball Club is a prime example of a well established club founded in 1947 which has its roots in the Estonian community but now is fully integrated into English sport with a mixed membership across all nationalities.

Further Information:

- An initial point of contact for the Estonian Community is the Association of Estonians in Great Britain.

For more information about partnership working with the Estonian community please contact Sporting Equals on **0121 777 1375**.

For further details please contact:

Sporting Equals

Centre-court.com, 1301 Stratford Road,
Hall Green, Birmingham, B28 9HH

Tel: 0121 777 1375 | Fax: 0121 325 5477

Email: info@sportingequals.org.uk

Website: www.sportingequals.org.uk

