

India - Estonia Relations

India has long-standing historical links with Estonia. India recognised the Republic of Estonia on 9th September 1991 and Diplomatic Relations were established on 2nd December of the same year. Since then, the bilateral relations continue to be cordial and friendly.

The Embassy of India in Helsinki is concurrently accredited to Estonia. Estonia opened its Embassy in New Delhi in March 2012.

There have been regular exchanges of visits at Ministerial level including:

From Estonia: Minister for Economy and Communications H.E. Mr. Juhan Parts visited on 3-8 February 2014. Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Urmas Paet visited on 2012-13 February 2013 to inaugurate the Embassy of Estonia. Minister for Education and Research H.E. Mr. Jaak Aaviksoo visited India on 13-16 October 2013 to attend Cyber Security Conference. Minister for Justice H.E. Mr. Hanno Pevkur visited on 9-11 December 2013.

From India: Minister of State for Corporate Affairs Shri Sachin Pilot visited in 15-16 April 2013. Smt. Lakshmi Panabaka, Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas visited on 14-16 June 2013. Smt. Jayanthi Natarajan, Minister for State for Environment and Forests visited Estonia on 20-22 September 2013. Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of Law & Justice and Electronics & IT visited Estonia on 11-15 September, 2016.

Agreements:

- Declaration of Principles of Cooperation between the Republic of Estonia and the Republic of India (signed and entered into force on October 15, 1993)
- Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation (signed on 15.10.1993 entered into force on October 24, 2004)
- Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation (signed on 14.10.1993; entered into force on March 13, 2000)
- Protocol on Bilateral Foreign Office Consultations (signed in August 1995)
- Agreement on Cooperation in the Spheres of Culture, Education, Science, Sports, Arts, Mass Media, Tourism and Youth Affairs (signed on October 15, 1993, entered into force on November 11, 1999)
- Agreement on Cooperation in the Fields of Science & Technology (signed on February 5, 1999, entered into force on August 6, 1999)
- Joint Business Council Agreement between FICCI & Estonian Chamber of Commerce.
- The Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion (DTAA) was signed on September 19, 2011.
- An MOU on Cooperation in the field of Biotechnology and Higher Education was signed in October 2013
- An MOU on Cooperation on Capacity Building and Other Related Areas in the Field of E-Governance signed in February 2014.
- Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons was signed on 15 November, 2016 and became effective on 1 March, 2017.

Foreign Office Consultations:

The last India-Estonia Foreign Office Consultations were held in Estonia on 26th August, 2016.

Commercial Relations:

Commercial relations between the two countries are good, but they could be more diverse and more significant. Considering the size of India and its rapidly developing economy, there is significant room for higher economic engagement. Good prospects for co-operation can be found in information technology, biotechnology and clean energy.

Bilateral trade between India and Estonia has not been steady over last 5 years. The main reason has been the diversion of trade via other countries of the European Union to achieve economies of scale. The turnover also depends on the comparative prices of Estonian pulp and paper as compared to other countries. The figures for last 5 years are as follows:

(In US\$ million)

Financial Year	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017 (April-July)
India's Exports to Estonia	79.13	68.09	63.68	97.50	29.14
India's Imports from Estonia	115.30	118.06	142.04	102.47	20.00
Total bilateral trade	194.43	186.15	205.72	199.96	49.14

Major items of export to Estonia from India include machinery and equipment, garments, knitwear, iron & Steel articles of leather; saddles and harness, travel goods, handbags, coffee, tea, spices, footwear and pharmaceutical products. Major Estonian exports to India include: Iron and steel, fertilizers, electrical machinery, paper and paperboard; paper pulp, veneer etc.

ITEC:

Estonia is covered under ITEC Programme. The scholarship under the Programme have become very popular in Estonia. 10 slots have been offered for the Financial Year 2016-17.

Cultural Relations:

There is a strong interest in Estonia for Indian culture. University of Tartu began teaching of Sanskrit in 1837. Several publications on Sanskrit language and literature were published. In recent years several noted Indian musicians and dancers have given performances in Estonia. Interest in Indian culture remains very strong. Tourism from Estonia has received a boost through introduction of e-tourist visa scheme for Estonian nationals from June, 2015. There are several private Indian dance groups in Estonia. "Amrita" dance school in Tallinn is engaged in the teaching of Indian classical dances. There are several training centres for Yoga and Meditation run by local experts. Some Indian Spiritual Gurus also have their followers and representative centres in Estonia.

Indian Community

The Indian community (NRIs and PIOs) in Estonia is small (about 450) including students and floating population. They are largely engaged in business and restaurants. Some of them are working for the Singapore-based Tolaram Group.

Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Finland website:
www.indianembassy.fi

Embassy of India, Finland Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInFinland>

Embassy of India, Finland Twitter:
<https://twitter.com/IndEmbFinEst>

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