



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
AND RESEARCH

# Language Skills for Future Success

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# Key ideas



# How to be successful, i.e. what employers want (ET2020)

Team working skills

Communication skills

Sector-specific skills

Computer skills

Adapting to new situations, acquiring new knowledge

Analytical and problem-solving skills

Personal skills for self-management, making sound judgments and managing risks

Social skills for management, leadership and conflict resolution



# Language and employability

Knowledge of more than one language seen as a demonstration of cultural openness and adaptability (ET2020)

Lack of language skills can become a serious obstacle for companies (ELAN 2006)

Multilingualism is a key factor in the success of a company but only when linked to other competences (CELAN)

In many European countries, employment and language skills are positively linked (CRELL 2015)



One is hired because of  
knowledge  
and experience in the area  
but fired because of social skills.



# On the EU level

Language competences = employability,  
mobility and personal development

Developing multilingualism

Teaching and learning languages effectively

Assessing language competences

Focus on the *quality of language teaching*,  
since FL competence remains below  
expectations in member states



# **Principles for FL in Estonia (Estonian FL strategy 2009-2017)**

Commitment to multilingualism and meeting various language needs

Use of internationally recognised language proficiency certificates (students and teachers)

Supporting FL teachers' associations and the Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers



# Principles for FL in Estonia (2)

Following the principles of CEFR

Encouraging CLIL studies and innovative methods

Languages for jobs – work on the role of FL in professional standards





# Layered language needs

I – English is a basic skill

II – advantage gained by moving beyond English: German, French, Russian, Spanish, Chinese

III – need for languages of neighbouring countries (for trade and mutual understanding)



# Foreign languages in Estonia

Language	General education 2016/2017	Vocational education 2015
English	<b>120 779</b>	10 230
Russian	52 883	4546
German	13 215	654
French	4149	63
Spanish	1103	-
Finnish	952	251

I foreign language: 95.4% English, 2.4% German

II foreign language: 80.6% Russian, 10.7% German



# National examination results in English

YEAR	Level not reached	B1	B2	C1 and C2 (certificates)
2015/2016	19.8%	32.5%	40.2%	7.6% (5.1 and 2.5)
2014/2015	18%	30%	47%	4% (3 and 1)
2013/2014	17.4%	30.6%	49.2%	2.8% (2.0 and 0.8)

Certificates submitted:

2016/2017: 743

2015/2016: 623

Full-time studies

# What do the figures tell us: national examination results

Level not reached – growing

B1 – growing

B2 – falling

C1, C2 certificates – growing (at the expense of B2)

Are we happy with this?



# What do the figures tell us: layered language needs?

English as a basic skill

First FL: 95.4% English, 2.4% German, 1.3% French  
and 0.8% Russian

Moving beyond English

Second FL: 80.6% Russian, 10.7% German, 2.4%  
French, 0.6% Finnish, 0.3% Spanish, 0.2% Chinese,  
0.1% Swedish

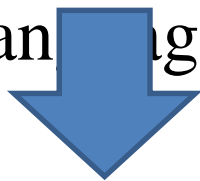
Languages of neighbouring countries (and other)

Third FL: 31.5% German, 19.2% Russian\*, 14.9%  
French, 13.9% Spanish, 9.3% Finnish\*, 2.3% Chinese,  
0.5% Swedish\*

# Future of Estonian Language Policy

Development Plan of the Estonian Language 2011–  
2017

Estonian Foreign Languages Strategy 2009–2017



Estonian Language Strategy 2018–2027

- Status and prestige
- Infrastructure
- Language learning and teaching



# Food for thought

Should we start earlier with foreign languages?

How early?

Should we teach English as the first FL to everyone?

How can we bridge the gap between early language learning and language learning at schools?

How can we cater for sustainable language learning?



# Food for thought (2)

How can we promote other foreign languages?

How can we help the ~50% of students who do not reach B2 in English by Year 12?

How can we raise the efficiency of teaching and learning?

Do and should all foreign language teachers demonstrate their level of proficiency in the language(s) they teach?





Let us know what you think:

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