



FEANTSA

**“Multiple barriers, multiple solutions: Inclusion into and through employment for people who are homeless in Europe”**

**National Report Estonia - Annual Theme 2007**

## REPORT 2007

### **Multiple barriers, multiple solutions: Inclusion into and through employment for people who are homeless in Europe.**

#### **Unemployment in the Republic of Estonia**

The employment rate in Estonia fell abruptly in the middle of 1990s as a result of economic re-structuring and the decrease in the population. At the same time unemployment grew rapidly, reaching a record of 14.6% in 2000. Since 2002 the number of employed people has increased and unemployment decreased thanks to favourable economic development. In 2003, for the first time in several years, the number of economically inactive people also decreased.

According to the Labour Force Survey, the employment rate was 62.6% in 2003, which is lower than the average in the European Union (64%). The employment rate of men is higher than that of women (74.5% and 65.5% respectively), which indicates women's greater inactivity. At the same time, the rate of women's employment in Estonia (58.8%) is higher than the EU objective for 2005 (57%). Also, the employment rate (52.1%) of older people (55-64) exceeds the EU objective for 2010 (50%).

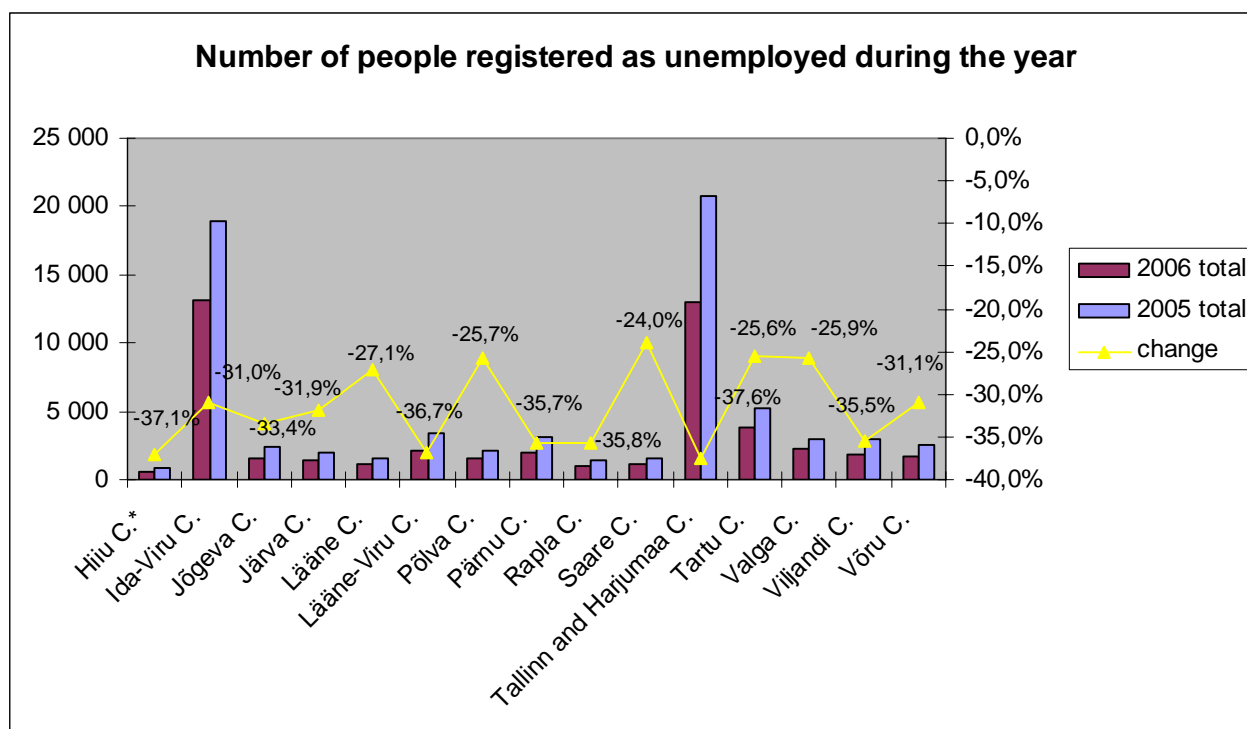
The unemployment rate in 2003 was 10%, which is relatively high when compared with the EU average (8%). Men's unemployment was a little higher than that of women (10.2% and 9.9% respectively).

Unemployment in Estonia is structural, which means that the demand and supply of labour is not in balance. Although the labour force is relatively highly educated, the education qualifications, skills and work experience are not always in accordance with the rapidly changing demands of the labour market. The lower the level of education, the higher is the risk of unemployment. Thus the unemployment rate of people with basic education is 17%, while the rate of unemployment of people with higher education is 5.8%.

Unemployment is characterised by major regional differences. Unemployment differs by more than three times between counties: from 5% in Rapla county to 18.2% in Ida-Viru county. Unemployment has been higher than average throughout the entire transition period in both industrial North-Eastern Estonia and in agricultural South-Eastern Estonian counties.

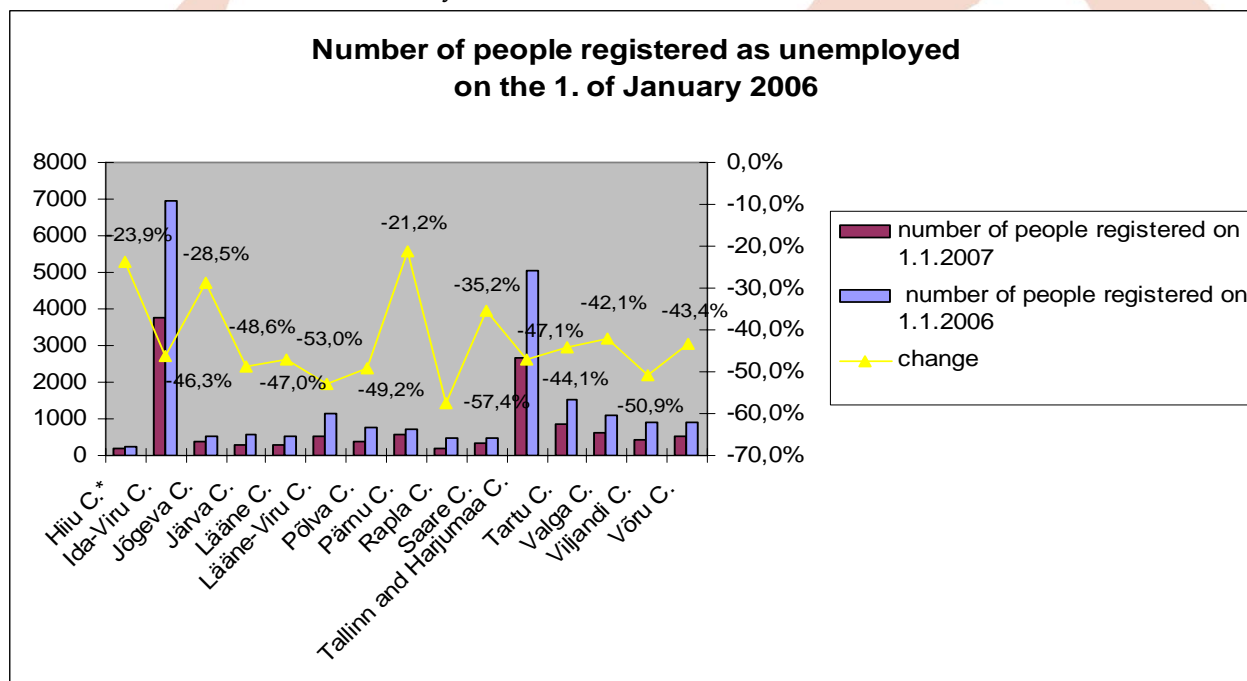
In 2006, 48 167 unemployed persons were registered at the Labour Market Board, 165 of them unemployed students. Compared to 2005, the number of unemployed persons has decreased by 23 568, i.e. -32.9 %. During the year the number of unemployed persons was the largest in Ida-Viru County, 13 102 (27.2 % of all unemployed persons), followed by Harju County at 12 997 (27 % of unemployed persons), the number was the smallest in Hiiu County, 512 (1.1 %).

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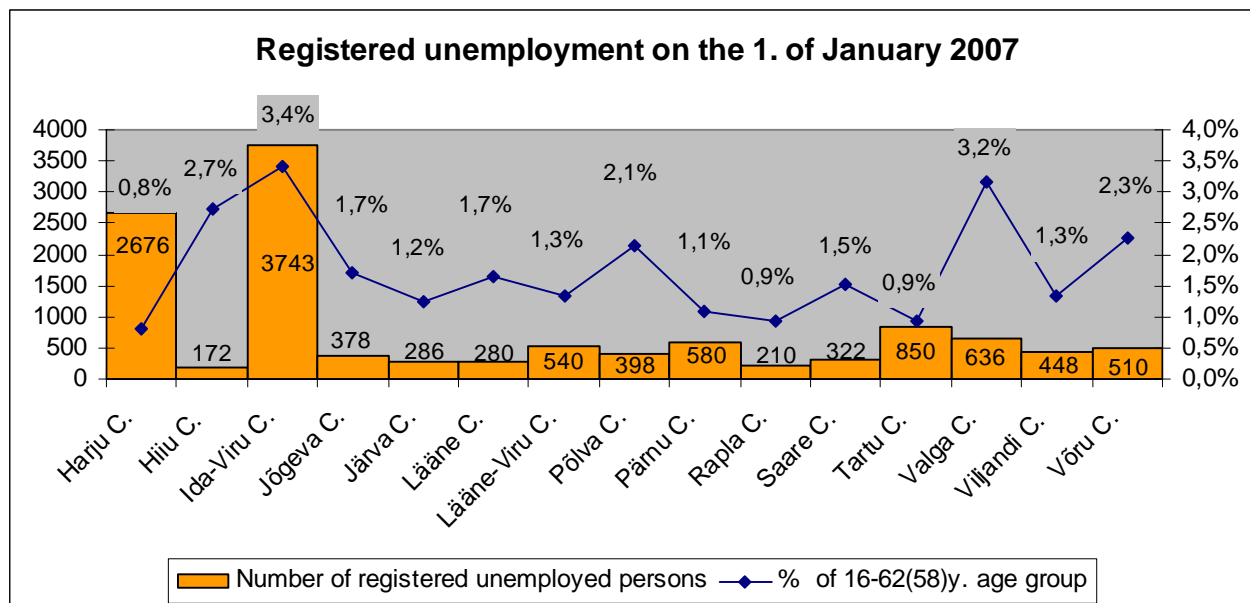
\* - hereafter C. stands for County

On 1 January 2007, 12 029 persons were registered as unemployed, compared to 1 January 2006 said number has decreased by 45.2 %.



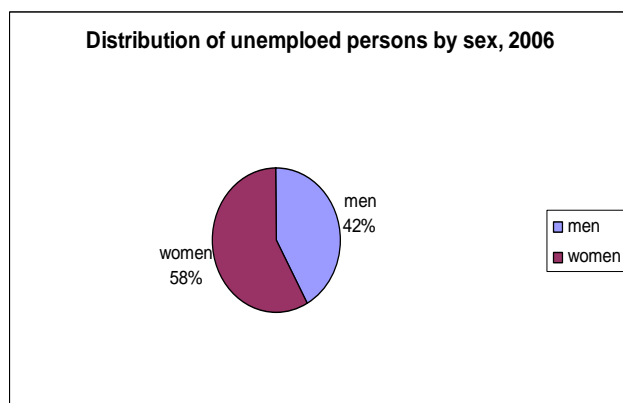
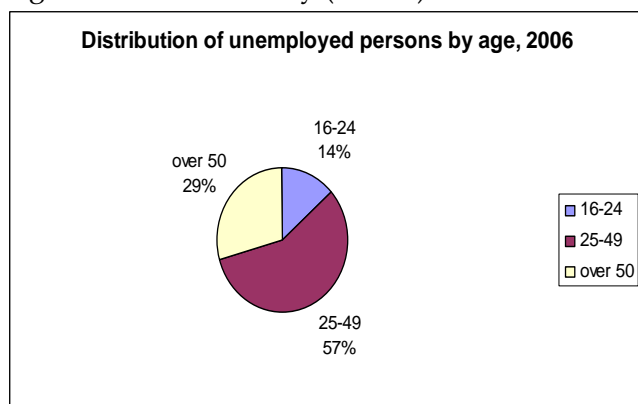
Proportion of unemployed persons of the population of 16-62(59,5) (pension age in Estonia) years of age was 1.4 % on 1 January 2007. Said number was the highest in Ida-Viru County (3.4 %) and lowest in Rapla County and Tartu County (0.9 %).

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### Distribution of unemployed persons by age and sex

41.8 % of the unemployed persons registered during the year 2006 were men; the proportion of men among the unemployed persons was the lowest in Rapla County (34.3 %) and the highest in Põlva County (49.6 %).



During the year 2006, the number of unemployed persons in the age group of 16-24 was 6 556, i.e. 13.6 % of all unemployed persons, the number of people 25-50 of age was 27 418, i.e. 56.9 % and the number of unemployed persons over 50 years of age was 14 193, i.e. 29.5 %. The proportion of young unemployed persons was the highest in Põlva County (16.9 % of all

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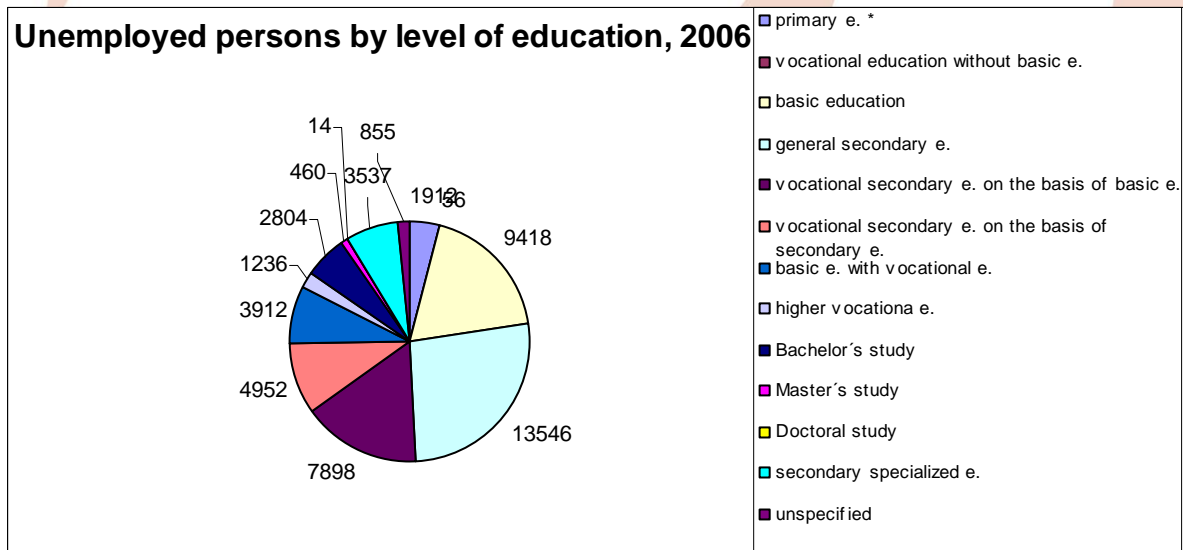
unemployed persons registered in Põlva County), followed by Tartu County where the respective figure was 15.8 %, the proportion of unemployed persons in the age group of 16-24 was the lowest in Lääne County (9.2 %).

The proportion of elderly people (over 50 years of age) was the highest in Lääne County (39.3 % of all unemployed persons) and the lowest in Põlva County (24.6 %).



### Unemployed persons by level of education

Among the persons registered as unemployed persons during the year, the most common level of education is general secondary education (13 564), followed by vocational secondary education on the basis of basic education (7 898), the smallest was the number of registered people with a Doctoral degree (14).

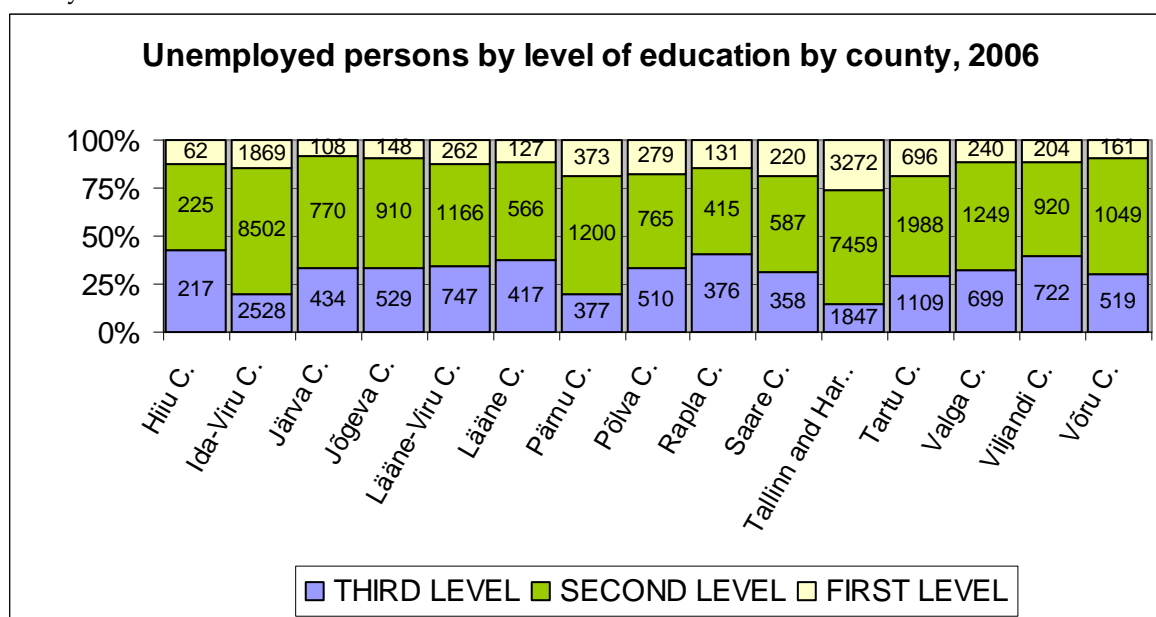


\* - e. - stands for education

By percentage, the number of unemployed persons with higher education was the lowest in Harju County, followed by Ida-Viru County and Pärnu County, the proportion of

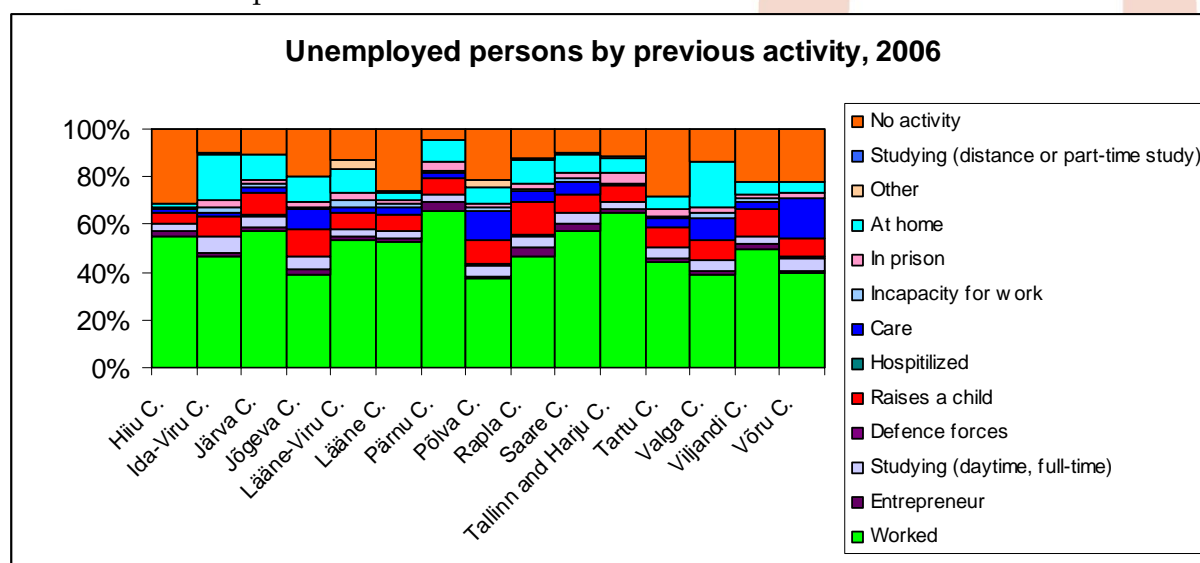
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unemployed persons with higher education was the highest in Hiiu County and Rapla County.

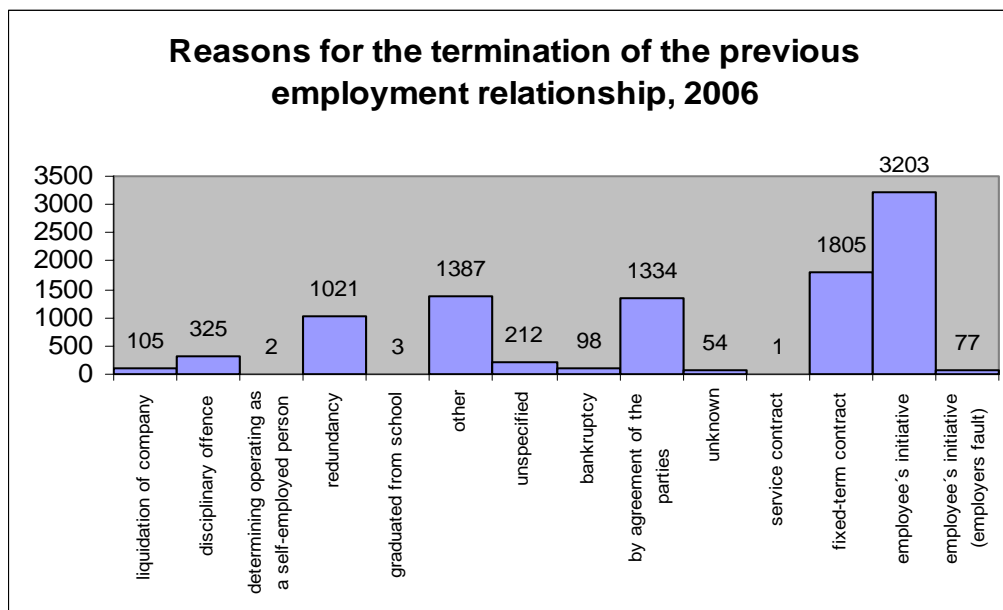


### Unemployed persons by previous activity

The main previous activity for the unemployed persons registered during the year 2006 was working (46.9 % of all registered unemployed persons); of them 211 had worked abroad. Prior to registering as unemployed person, 4 630 persons had stayed at home and 3 448 had raised a child, 1 946 had participated in full-time or in daytime study and 96 in part-time and/or distance study, 1 418 had been caregivers, 1 309 had been in prison, 687 had been entrepreneurs, 559 held the certificate of incapacity for work, 86 served in the defence forces and 4 had been hospitalized.



For one third of previously worked persons the reason for the termination of the previous employment relationship was the initiative of the employee, for 18.7 % the reason was fixed-term contract. For 1 021 unemployed persons the previous employment relationship ended with redundancy and for 105 with the liquidation of the company.



### Risk groups

The risk groups in the Estonian labour market are mainly young people, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the Russian speaking population of Estonia who do not also speak Estonian<sup>1</sup>, and jobseekers with low educational attainment and people aged over 45 years old:

**Youth unemployment** of (those aged 15 -24 years old) grew abruptly in 2003 and unemployment among this group is considerably higher (20.6%) than in other age groups, as usually they lack previous work experience. Young people make 7.5% of all unemployed jobseekers.

**Long-term unemployed people** (unemployed for more than one year) make 46% of the total unemployed. The rate of long-term unemployment has grown among the 50 to 69 years old age group and unemployed people with low levels of education attainment. Also, very long-term unemployment (unemployed over 24 months) has increased, especially among men. Continuing long-term unemployment in the countryside has resulted in discouraged people who would like to work, but who have given up looking for work (according to data for 2003, a total of about 18,000 people).

The unemployment rate of **non-Estonians** is nearly twice as high as that of Estonians, being 15.2% and 7.3% respectively. The main barrier in finding work is the lack of knowledge of the Estonian language and residence in an area of high unemployment.

**The unemployment rate of disabled people and people with long-term health problems** in 2002 was three times higher than that of people without disabilities - 26%. According to the Labour Force Survey registered unemployment has always been significantly lower than the number of people without jobs but who are not registered with the public employment service. Only a third of the long-term unemployed are registered at public employment offices.

<sup>1</sup> This group was identified in the JIM, and is hereafter referred to as 'non-Estonians'.



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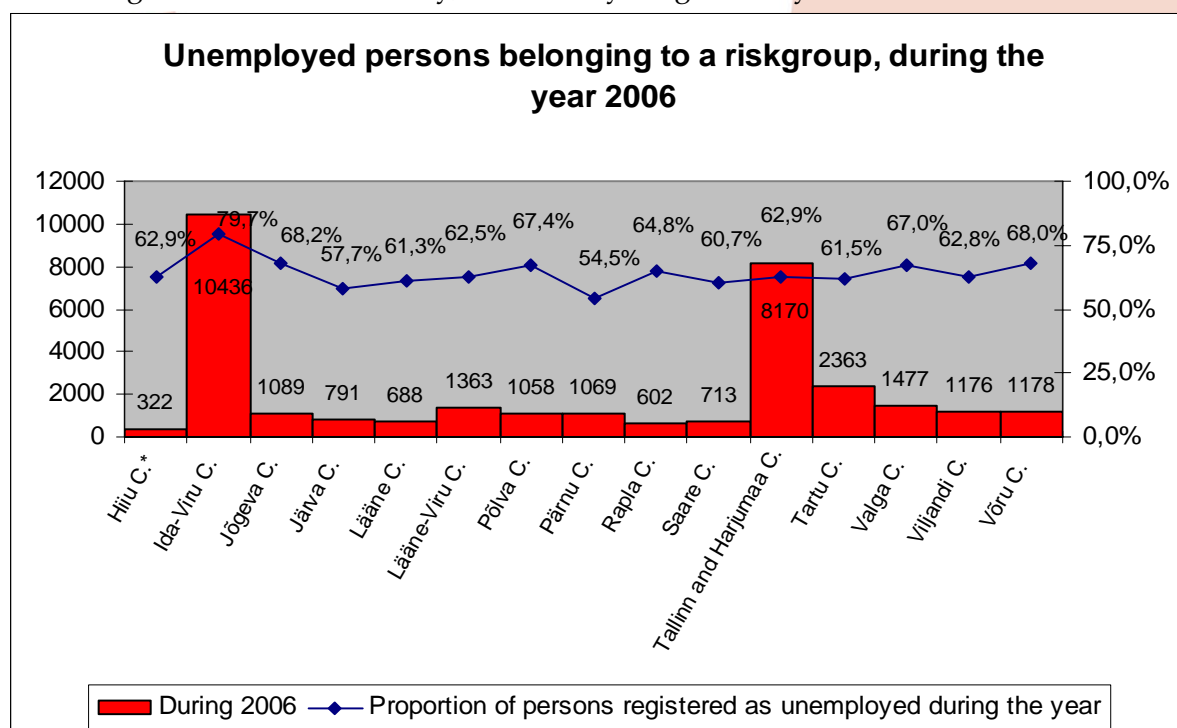
A total of 99,000 unemployed people were registered at public employment offices in 2003 (an average of 43,319 were accounted for per month), among whom 54% received unemployment insurance benefits or state unemployment benefits.

In 2006, 32 495 unemployed persons or 67.5 % of all unemployed persons registered during the year belonged to the risk groups listed in §10(5) of the Labour Market Services and Support Act:

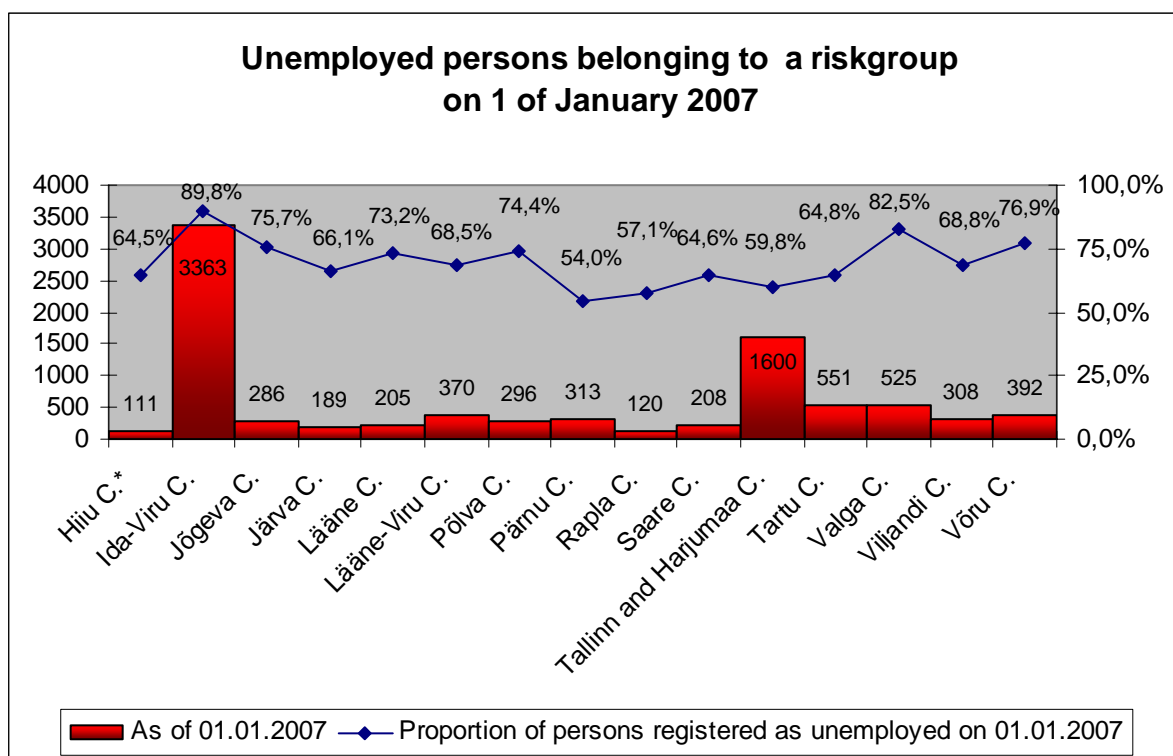
- 1) unemployed persons with disabilities who, due to the disabilities, need additional help upon commencing employment;
- 2) unemployed persons of sixteen up to twenty-four years of age;
- 3) unemployed persons released from prison within the twelve months preceding registration as unemployed;
- 4) unemployed persons of fifty five years up to the pensionable age;
- 5) unemployed persons who, prior to registration as unemployed, have received a caregiver's allowance pursuant to § 8 of the Social Benefits for Disabled Persons Act and who have not been employed or engaged in an activity equal to work during the twelve months prior to registration as unemployed;

On 1 January 2007, 8 837 unemployed persons belonging to the risk group (73.5 % of all unemployed persons) were registered in the Labour Market Board.

During the year the proportion of unemployed persons belonging to the risk group was the highest in Ida-Viru County (79.7 %), followed by Võru County (68 %), and the proportion of unemployed persons belonging to the risk group was the lowest in Pärnu County (54.5 %); as of 1 January 2007, the proportion of unemployed persons belonging to the risk group was still the highest in Ida-Viru County, followed by Valga County.







The number of **long-term unemployed** during the year 2006 was 20 578 (42.7 %), by day the proportion of long-term unemployed of all unemployed persons is 47.5 %.

The number of registered unemployed persons **not speaking Estonian** during the year 2006 was 12 566 or 26.1 % of all unemployed persons registered during the year, by day the proportion of persons not speaking Estonian was 29.4 %.

The number of unemployed persons **over 55 years of age** registered in the Labour Market Board during the year 2006 was 5 858, i.e. 12.2 %, on 1 January the proportion of older persons of all unemployed persons was 16.1 %.

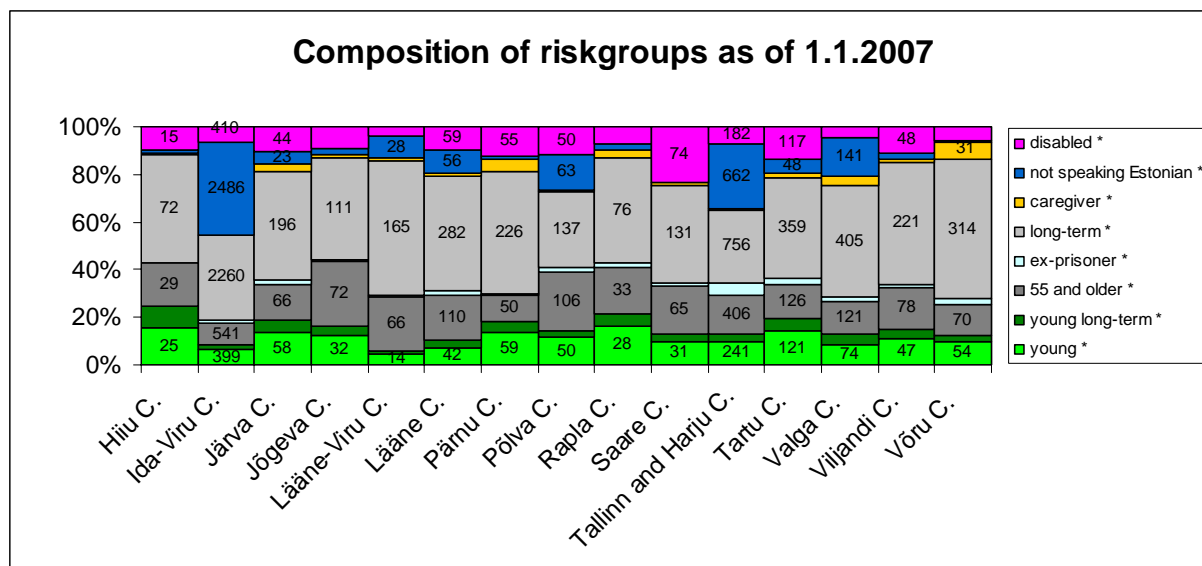
During the year the number of registered **16-24 year old** unemployed persons was 6 783 (14.1 %), by day the proportion of young unemployed persons was 10.6 %. 2 745 young unemployed persons had been unemployed for over 6 months and on 1 January the number of registered **young long-term unemployed** was 460 (3.8 % of all unemployed persons and 36 % of all young unemployed persons).

The number of persons who had been **released from prison** in the previous 12 months and who had registered as unemployed during the year was 1 527 (3.2 %) and by day the proportion of persons released from prison was 2.6 %.

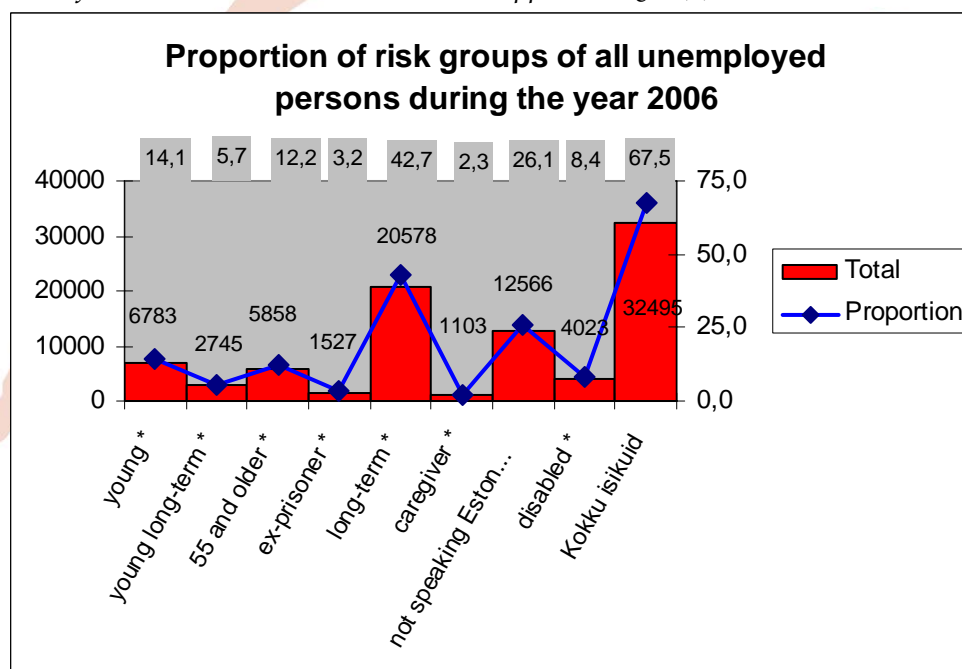
During the year 2006 the number of persons who had not worked in 12 months prior to registering as unemployed and had received **caregiver's allowance** pursuant to § 8 of Social Benefits for Disabled Persons Act or § 23 (2) of Social Welfare Act was 1 103 (2.3 %) and by day their proportion was 1.6 % of all unemployed persons.

The number of **disabled** unemployed persons registered during the year was 4 023 (8.4 %) and 1 170 on 1 January (9.7 % of all unemployed persons).

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\* - abbreviation from Labour Market Services and Support Act §10(5)



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### Labour Market Board

The aim of the Labour Market Board is to reduce unemployment and provide assistance to those seeking work and to employers by means of an efficient labour market policy.

### The Labour Market Board:

- social protection of the unemployed and provision of employment services, granting of consent to aliens applying for work permits, sales of employment record books at the Labour Market Board departments;
- processes and analyses the database of job seekers and of the employment services supplied;
- fulfils the obligations arising from international agreements and international legislation;

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- organises cooperation between state agencies, local governments, federations of employees and employers for the purpose of resolving employment problems and ensuring social protection of the unemployed.

### Labour Market Board departments

- register job seekers, including the unemployed;
- provide employment services to employers and job seekers;
- pay benefits to the unemployed (unemployment benefit, stipends, single benefit),
- communicate information and gather information about vacant positions;
- keep records of unemployed persons, job seekers and receivers of employment services;
- decide granting of consent to aliens for work permits;
- sell employment record books to employers;
- participate in the development of the labour market policy and programmes and organise their implementation.

### Labour Market Board departments

- give information on the situation in the labour market and of the possibilities of employment training,
- provide vocational guidance,
- mediate jobs,
- provide employment subsidies for starting a business,
- provide employment subsidies to employers for employment of persons who are less competitive in the labour market,
- provide labour market training,
- organise community placement.

### Unemployment allowance

Unemployment allowance is a type of compulsory allowance the purpose of which is to pay benefits to employees upon unemployment, collective redundancy and insolvency of employers. The benefits are financed with the money received from unemployment allowance premiums. The unemployment allowance premium in 2003 is 1% of earnings and other fees for employees and 0.5% on gross payroll for employers.

The person having become unemployed should register himself as unemployed in the employment office for receiving the unemployment allowance benefit.

Unemployment allowance benefits are paid by the Estonian Unemployment Allowance Fund.

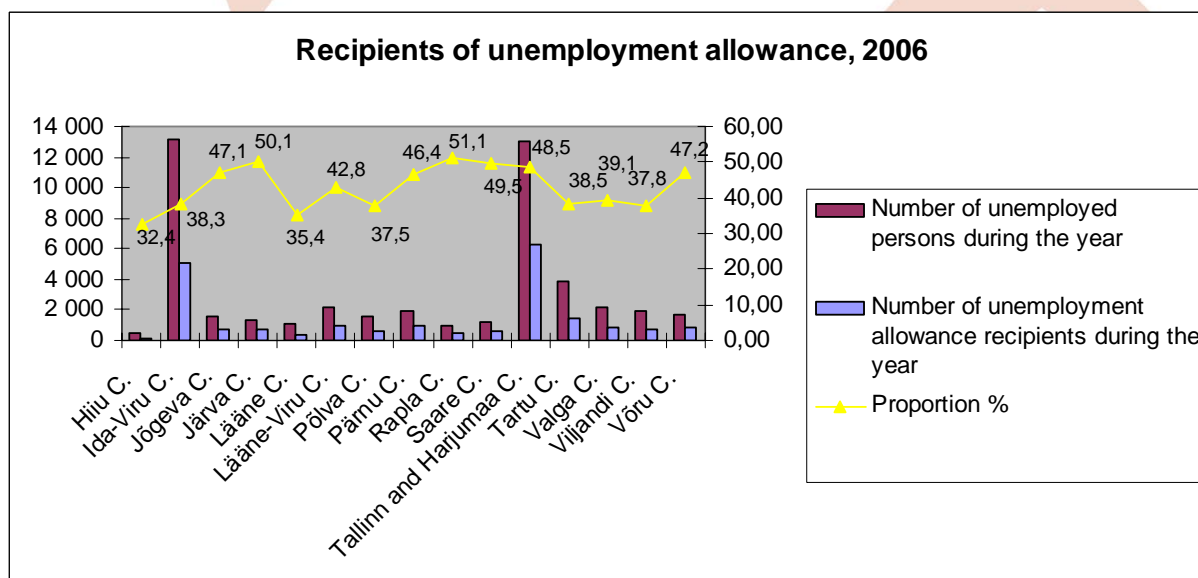
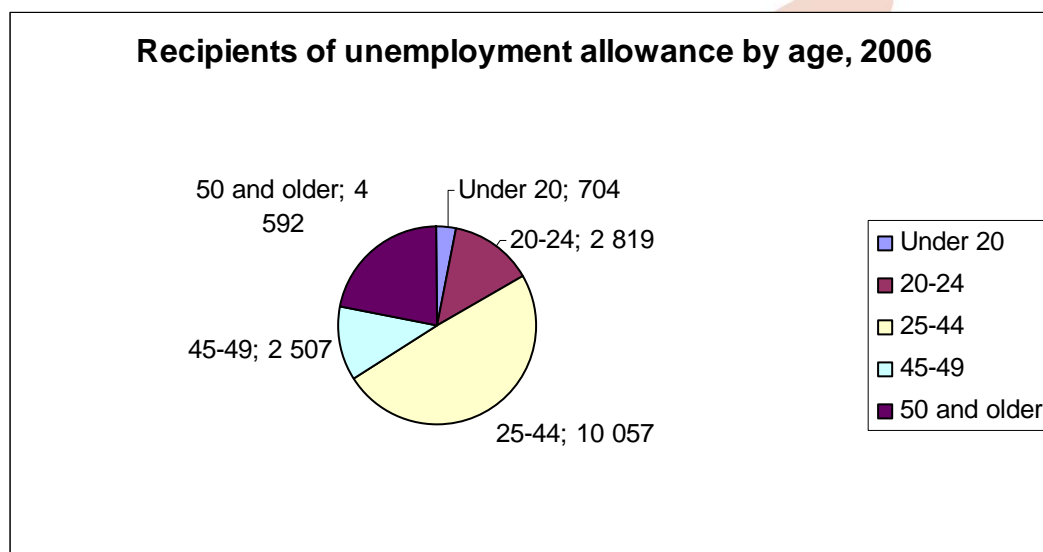
The collection of unemployment allowance premiums started from 1 January 2002, first unemployment allowance benefits were paid out from 1 January 2003.

During the year 2006, 20 679 unemployed persons, i.e. 42.9 % of all unemployed persons, received unemployment allowance.

66.7 % of the recipients of unemployment allowance were women. The proportion of recipients of unemployment allowance was the largest in the 25-44 age group (48.6 %),

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followed by persons over 50 years of age (22.2 %). During the year 2006 the number of recipients of unemployment allowance under 20 years of age was 704, i.e. 3.4 %, the proportion of recipients of unemployment allowance in the 20-24 age group was 13.6 % and in the 45-49 age group 12.1 % of all recipients of unemployment allowance.



The average number of days of receiving the allowance was 126.

During the year a total of 16 070 815.34 croons was paid for unemployment allowance, thus the average expenditure on one recipient was 777.16 croons.

### Labour Market Training

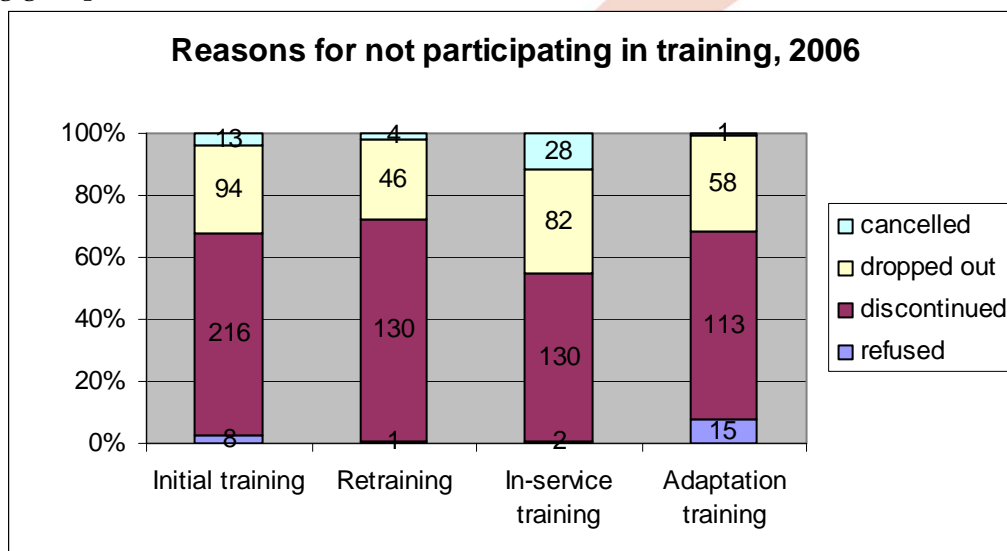
During 2006, 7 073 unemployed persons were referred to labour market training; that is 2 781 referrals less than in 2005, but compared to the previous year the proportion of persons participating in training increased (2005 - 13.7 %, 2006 - 14.7 %).

During the year there were 8 905 referrals to training; that is 4 095 referrals less than in 2005. 103 unemployed persons were referred to professional examinations, 7 of them did not pass the examination and 1 person did not take the examination

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Trainings were divided as follows: 2 947 initial trainings, 1 219 re-trainings, 2 750 in-service trainings and 1 989 adaptation trainings.

The main reason for not participating in training was discontinuation of training, 280 persons dropped out and 26 persons refused to participate. 46 referrals to training were terminated as the training did not take place, mainly due to the lack of participants in training groups.



### Housing and living conditions

Most of Estonian households (85%) live in a house or an apartment that belongs to them, 13% are renting a dwelling.

As a result of housing reform, most dwellings are held in private property and state and local municipalities possess only 4% of the housing fund.

Estonia is among those European countries that are comparatively well supplied with housing space. The problem is rather the fact that the structure of living space does not correspond to the structure of households. Retired people often use living space that exceeds their needs, while larger households live in a confined space. Another problem is that the regional distribution of dwellings does not coincide with the distribution of residents. The lack of housing is noticeable in growth centres. An issue is also relatively high age and level of amortisation of dwellings. Approximately 40% of the Estonian housing was constructed before 1960.

Most of Estonian households (72%) live in buildings of multiple apartments, which are satisfactorily supplied with water and sewerage services. A third of households, however, live in relatively poor dwellings or dwellings that do not meet their needs, and the size and comfort of living space often depend on the income of the household.

One reason, but not the only one, for vulnerability in the housing market is low income. Additional risk factors are unemployment, age, disability, household composition (many children, single parent families, retired people, and youth). A specific risk group in Estonia is tenants living in restituted dwellings, whose housing problems are caused by the lack of the



opportunity for dwelling privatisation. Nearly a third of Estonian households, including a noticeable share of elderly households and lessees of restituted dwellings, have difficulties in paying their housing costs. An estimated 10% of Tallinn households have long-term debts for rent or other household expenses.

Although the conditions commercial banks attach to housing loans have in comparison with earlier years become significantly more favourable, those taking out loans tend to be families with higher than average income, who live in the capital city or other larger towns. Slightly less than a third of people aged over 30 years old live with their parents, grandparents or some other household. Presumably therefore the majority of young people who live in their parents' home have no material means to obtain their own separate residence.

The number of homeless people is estimated to be 3,500, approximately 0.3% of the population. The problem of homelessness is more visible in Tallinn and in other larger towns. More than three quarters of homeless people are men aged older than 50 years. The number of homeless people is in line with the general characteristics of the population. The geographical distribution of homeless people is in line with the regional differences in the population. The main reasons leading to homelessness are unemployment and alcoholism or drug addiction.

### **Strategy for social inclusion**

Estonia's strategy for social inclusion follows the common objectives of the European Union to decrease poverty and social exclusion. The basis for the strategy is the Joint Inclusion Memorandum (JIM, 2003) which analyses the causes of poverty and social exclusion, assesses the influence of current policies on decreasing poverty and exclusion and defines the most important challenges and fields of activity to increase social inclusion.

The principles of Estonian strategy for social inclusion are:

**Work is the best protection against poverty and exclusion.** A presupposition in decreasing poverty and exclusion is the highest possible employment rate of the entire working age population. Work must secure a better ability to cope economically and a better quality of life than dependency on social benefits. The tax and social protection systems must also favour and support getting work and working.

**Education is an investment in the individual.** A good level education that meets the expectations of the labour market extends everyone's opportunities for work and self-realisation, promotes independence and well-being, and active participation in society. The education system must ensure everyone benefits from a good pre-school education, study possibilities that meet their interests and abilities, and a preparation for working life. Lifelong learning must be available to everybody, independently from previous education, social status or solvency.

**Decent social protection.** For those, who because poor health, old age, disability or lack of suitable work are not able to earn income by working, decent income must be provided by social security. The benefits must be on such a level that they will prevent poverty where social risks emerge. In case of poverty, assistance must be provided which eliminates the reasons for poverty and avoids long-term dependency on social assistance.

**Integrated approach to decrease poverty and exclusion.** Poverty and social exclusion are problems with several facets: solutions must offer coherence between policies in different

fields – in particular, economic, educational, work-related, social protection, health care and housing policies – and so build one common strategy. For the individual this means providing coherent assistance in accordance with their needs, which, in turn, assumes co-operation between different institutions at both local and national levels.

Proceeding from the above the key areas of decreasing poverty and social exclusion are increasing employment and enhancing social protection, availability of education, health care and housing, improving health indices, decreasing violence against women and children, and taking advantage of the opportunities provided by information and communication technology in order to decrease regional exclusion. In addition the strategy covers needs connected with legal assistance and victim support, access to culture, sports and leisure opportunities, and includes local communities in the process of decreasing poverty and social exclusion.

Among the risk groups, particular attention is paid to the long-term unemployed and other individuals excluded from the labour market, school dropouts or young people in danger of dropping out, children with special needs, disabled people, people with housing problems and victims of crime and violence.

### **Additional labour market measures for risk groups**

Risk groups, in common with other jobseekers, have the right to general labour market measures according to their needs (counselling, employment mediation, labour market training, labour market benefits). At the same time members of the risk groups often face personal or social barriers in getting and keeping a job, and consequently they may need additional labour market or other measures.

Following additional labour market measures are offered to risk groups:

**internship:** the priority target group is young people and the long-term unemployed. The purpose of internship is to help the unemployed gain the work experience necessary to find a steady job, and to help the employer find suitable employees. In 2005 up to 4000 unemployed people (6000 in 2006) will have the opportunity to participate in work internships. 10 million kroons has been set aside for this service (including 6 million kroons from EU structural funds) in 2005, and 15 million kroons in 2006 (including 8 million from EU structural funds).

**work exercise:** for very long-term unemployed people and the discouraged, who have lost working skills and habits, activities aimed at developing social skills and forming working habits will be offered in co-operation with local municipalities. The work exercise serviced will be piloted in 2005 within the framework of national employment programme and 4 million kroons has been planned for that purpose, including 3 million kroons from EU structural funds.

**public work:** the target group consists of the unemployed for whom no suitable work can be offered at that moment. Participation in public work is organised by the employment office in co-operation with the local municipality. The jobseekers get paid.

**transportation benefits:** transportation benefit is paid in order to compensate for the transportation costs of participating in active labour market measures (in particular, labour market training and work internship) and for participants in public work..



**labour market benefit for the employer:** wage subsidy will be used only as a last measure to secure employment for the long-term unemployed. The wage subsidy is paid with the purpose of influencing the employer's recruitment decision in favour of the long-term unemployed and is intended to be combined with other active labour market measures.

**Work and workplace adjustment for disabled people:** the service includes a range of measures eliminate or relieve the barriers disabled people may face in getting or keeping a job. Moreover it is aimed to compensate for disability-related additional expenses connected with overcoming the barriers to starting of keeping work. The types of assistance include adjustment of working premises and equipment, support during job interview (assistance in communicating), providing special technical aids necessary for work, working with a support person, compensating for the additional transportation costs caused by the disability (in case it is not possible to use public transportation for getting to work). In 2004 the service of adjusting working places is being piloted in the framework of National Employment Programme. 5 million kroons has been planned for that purpose, including 3 million kroons from EU structural funds. In 2005, 5 million kroons has been planned for this service and 6 million kroons in 2006.

**in-service training allowance of a disabled employee:** in order to support the competitiveness and training opportunities for disabled employees, an additional training benefit will be paid to the disabled employee. The benefit will be paid to partially compensate for the actual training costs connected with work in amount of up to 9,600 kroons in the course of three calendar years.

**services to the employer of a disabled employee:** the employer is counselled in the recruitment of disabled people and in organising their work; they are compensated partially or fully for the adjustment costs of the work place and are allowed social tax benefits. The Ministry of Social Affairs maintains a website on the topic of disability employment ([www.pite.ee](http://www.pite.ee)), where employers can get practical information from conducting job interviews to adjusting work places. Also, the Ministry will start issuing a mark of recognition to employers friendly to disabled people.

**supporting the job search of non-Estonian-speaking people:** providing information and counselling in Russian, and if needed, labour market training.

**integrating ex-prisoners into the labour market:** in co-operation with the prison social workers or probation supervisors the public employment office case managers will providing information and other assistance prior to release from prison. After release, training in independent living skills will be offered and individual action plans implemented. The employer is supported first of all through providing a work instructor and consecutive counselling.

### **Improving the availability of health care to risk groups**

In order to improve the availability of initial health care, a **family doctor's advice line** was started from 2005. The advice line is free of charge (when calling on a land-line) and operate 24 hours a day. The advice line is among other things enable people without health insurance coverage for whom access to family doctors is limited to receive initial counselling. It was simultaneously planned to increase general health care for people without health insurance cover in amount that is greater than in previous years.

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Family and ambulatory specialised medical care is provided to people as close to their homes as possible, which among other things help prevent transportation costs to reach the specialised medical care that are too high for risk groups. In addition, efforts will continue to shorten and better organise waiting lists in order to ensure that the people with greater medical need are able to get treatment in time. This in turn will prevent possible complications and the resulting increased need for personal assistance.

To improve the availability and quality of emergency medical care (ambulance) 172.7 million kroons has been allocated in the state budget for the year 2004 and 182.7 million kroons is planned for the year 2005.

### **Health promotion**

The Government's strategic objectives for promoting the nation's public health are: to increase people's healthy behavioural habits, decrease health damage caused by addictive substances, improve the nation's mental health and ability to cope with daily life, and ensure better opportunities for the healthy development of children.

### **Prevention of drug addiction**

The national strategy for preventing drug addiction is being implemented (having been worked out and approved by the Government until the year 2012). The key part of the strategy is decreasing risk behaviour of children and young people. In particular, it is planned to raise the quality of drug prevention work at the schools by increasing the emphasis on social skills. Also, prevention work is being promoted at a local level and public awareness on addiction problems is being raised. In addition to preventive work, the availability of treatment and rehabilitation services is being improved first of all in the areas of wider spreading of addiction problems.

In order to prevent drug addiction and decrease the health damage caused by drug addiction and alcoholism, 15.1 million kroons has been allocated from state budget for 2004, and 7.4 million kroons for 2005.

### **HIV/AIDS prevention**

The national programme for preventing HIV/AIDS for the period 2002-2006 - aims to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2007, to decrease risk behaviour among youngsters aged 15 to 24 years, and to extend regional networking to prevent HIV/AIDS to all counties by the end of 2004.

Case managers help ensure HIV-positive people have access to health care and psychosocial services with the help of case managers. AIDS counselling offices guarantee quality voluntary counselling and testing for HIV.

### **Developing social services that address barriers to working**

Under the national welfare strategy several measures are in place aimed at achieving this objective, in particular, in the field of social assistance and rehabilitation and welfare of people with special needs. In the field of social assistance it is planned to raise the subsistence level, introduce an individually focussed approach, as well as to improve coherence with employment measures, and it is planned to increase the responsibility of local municipalities and coordinate social assistance more effectively with housing services.

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In order to implement social assistance measures, the Ministry of Social Affairs has proposed an allocation of 495 million kroons from the state budget for 2005, and similar amounts for the following years.

It is often difficult for people with special needs to enter employment and stay there. Therefore it is intended to ensure that rehabilitation services and social benefits for disabled people work together more coherently by reforming the administration of rehabilitation and developing appropriate technical aids and personal support services. These reforms should improve the opportunities for disabled people to participate in employment.

In order to extend labour market and welfare services targeted to the risk groups (including rehabilitation and technical aids to disabled people of working age and ex-prisoners), 18 million kroons was planned in the state budget for 2005.

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### Sources used:

1. Estonia's National Action Plan for Social Inclusion  
[www.sm.ee](http://www.sm.ee)
2. Labour Market Services and Benefits Act [www.tta.ee/legislation](http://www.tta.ee/legislation)
3. 2006 summary of Estonian Labour Market Board [www.tta.ee/statistics](http://www.tta.ee/statistics)

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