

SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND TESTING TITULAR LANGUAGES: ESTONIA

**Jaan Õispuu,
Leader of the Foreign Language Strategy
Commission**

- **Main ways to plan a state language policy are:**
 - ✘ **language policy in one document,**
 - ✘ **language policy in different documents**

- 1997

LANGUAGE TRAINING STRATEGY FOR THE NON-ESTONIAN- SPEAKING POPULATION

- **2004**

**THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF
THE ESTONIAN LANGUAGE
2004-2010**

? 2008

THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE STRATEGY

The Estonian society consists of two large ethnic and linguistic communities:



1) *the Estonian nation,*

2) *the Russian-speaking community* which is ethnically and linguistically very different

ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE ESTONIAN POPULATION

(%)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Estonians</u>	<u>Other ethnicities</u>
1934	91,66	8,35
1989	61,53	38,47
1996	64,59	34,70
2006	65,20	34,80

HISTORICAL MINORITIES

**(In 1925 “THE CULTURAL AUTONOMY
FOR NATIONAL MINORITIES ACT”**

- ✘ Russian**
- ✘ German**
- ✘ Swedish**
- ✘ Jewish**

NON-ESTONIAN-SPEAKING POPULATION

HISTORICAL MINORITIES	9%
AFTER-WAR IMMIGRANTS	91%

TITULAR LANGUAGE

**“LANGUAGE ACT OF THE ESTONIAN
SSR” (1989)**

- ⌘ state language**
- ⌘ requirements for work-related Estonian language skills depending on the position**

MAIN ACTIVITIES since 1989:

- ⌘ language acquisition and testing planning**
- ⌘ language status planning**
- ⌘ language usage planning**

DEVELOPMENT OF TESTING

1989-1991: the first steps (requirements, content, levels). Estonia still the Estonian SSR.

- ✘ no obligations for anybody**
- ✘ changes in the educational circles**

**1991-1995: August, 20 1991 Estonia
became independent**

- ⌘ a lot of criticism**
- ⌘ testing system: work-related levels (A, B, C, D, E, F); Language Centre**
- ⌘ the most important changes in the educational system (new aims, content, testing)**

1995-1997: beginning of the active international framework

- ✦ **1995-1997 “Threshold Level for Estonian” (1997) - a basis for the development curricula, materials and examinations. The international framework was continued in the area of testing;**
- ✦ **1995 a new Language Act was adopted**

- ⌘ In 1989-1997 several test versions for several languages were worked out ,**
- ⌘ this had not led to a common control and examination system**

1997 –

- ⌘ National Examination and Qualification Centre of Estonia – coordinated testing system;**
- ⌘ international framework (institutions, projects etc)**

MAIN TARGET GROUPS AND FIELDS OF TESTING

✘ **work-related**

✘ **citizenship**

✘ **school-leavers**

ground education

secondary education

**⌘ state language exams (work-related,
citizenship) 4 skills**

⌘ state exams for school-leavers

4 skills + grammar

NEQC is responsible for the arrangement of all examinations:

- ⌘ Estonian as a mother tongue**
- ⌘ Estonian as a second language**
- ⌘ Estonian as a foreign language**
- ⌘ foreign languages**

LEVELS

- ✘ elementary level
- ✘ intermediate level
- ✘ advanced level

THANK YOU!