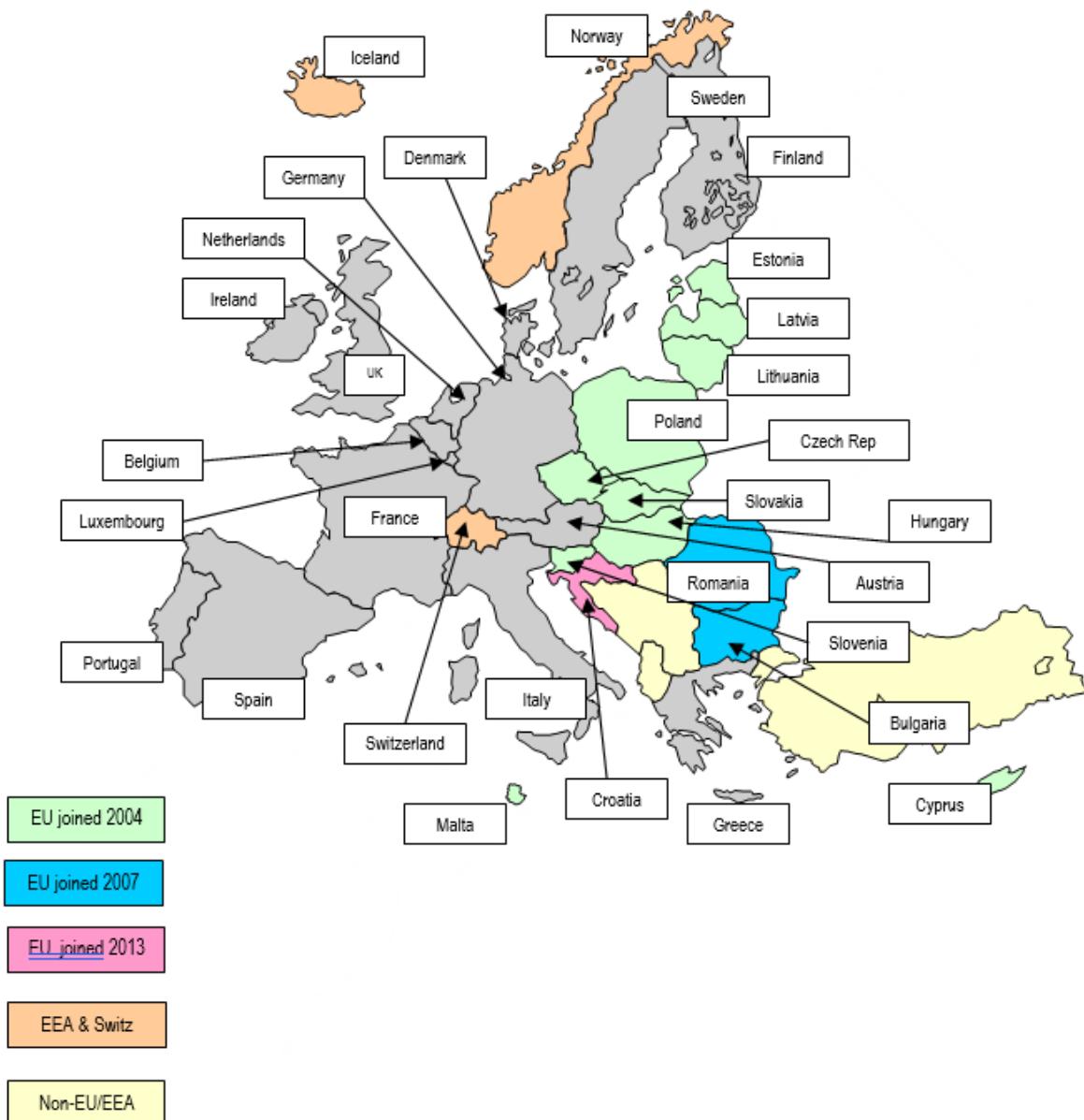


Council of European Dentists

MANUAL OF DENTAL PRACTICE 2026

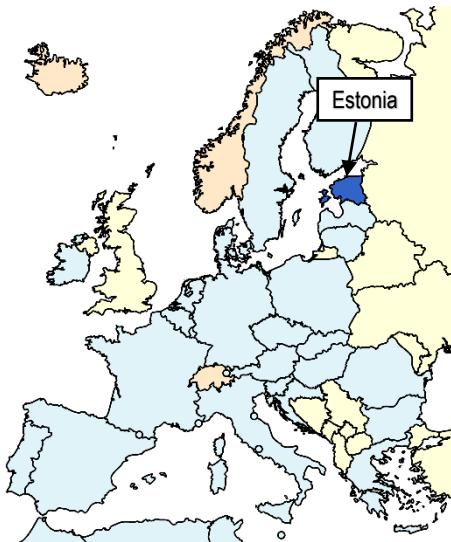
Estonia

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2026





Estonia



In the EU/EEA since	2004
Population (2024)	1 374 687 ¹
GDP PPP per capita (2024)	€28 403 ²
Currency	Euro
Official language(s)	Estonian

The Estonian solidarity-based healthcare system is largely centralised, with a public social health insurance model. Healthcare is funded through general taxation, with an additional special tax for health, which is paid by the employer at 13% of salaries. Around 96% of the population is equally covered³, independent of contributions, age, income or health risks. Dental care is covered by the Estonian Health Insurance Fund for insured children and young adults under 19 years old.

Number of dentists (active)	1 407
(Active) dentist to population ratio (per 100 000 inhab)	102
Cost of registration (for Estonia graduates)	15€
Cost of registration (for EU or Swiss graduates)	260€

Three specialities exist in Estonia – oral maxilla-facial surgery, orthodontics and restorative dentistry. The use of auxiliaries is limited to a few hygienists. CPD is not mandatory but other requirements exists.

Date of last revision: 19 January 2026

Government and healthcare in Estonia

The Republic of Estonia, *Eesti Vabariik* in Estonian, lies on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea, sharing land borders with Russia and Latvia. Estonia comprises an area of 45,215 sq. km. A slight steady population growth has been observed over the last several years through immigration, coupled with an ageing population, and relatively low birth rates.

Estonia is a democratic parliamentary republic, with a President, Prime Minister, Cabinet and a State assembly (Riigikogu). Elections take place every 4 years. Local governments are based in 15 counties.

Healthcare delivery in Estonia is provided through private practice and a statutory, solidarity-based health insurance system. This system operates under the Estonian Health Insurance Fund (*Tervisekassa*), a public independent body.

The Ministry of Social Affairs, responsible for the health system, includes government agencies such as the Health Board (also the relevant regulatory body).

Local governments can also provide limited support in organising and financing health services, by way of carrying out public health activities and the management of some hospitals. The source of income of the health insurance is 13% of the social tax (33% of employee's gross salary paid by the employer).

Health insurance is based on the solidarity principle: accessibility to health services is not dependent on the amount of social tax paid by the person. The health insurance fund covers the cost of health services to medical institutions for insured persons.

All citizens, permanent residents as well as temporary residents, paying the social tax or having the social tax covered by another

working resident (in the case of children, seniors, unemployed persons, and women on pregnancy or maternity leave) fall within the scope of insured persons under the healthcare scheme.

Dental care, free of charge, is provided by dentists contracted (under limited budget) through the Estonian Health Insurance Fund, for children under 19, with up to one year of free dental treatment following the person's 19th birthday, and for some orthodontic treatments for children.

Partial reimbursement of adult dental care is also provided up to 60 euros a year. Increased benefits are available for pregnant women and mothers of children under one, pensioners, persons over 63 years old and under incapacity for work, or with increased needs for dental care, of up to 105 euros a year.

	Year	Source
% GDP spent on all healthcare	7.1	2022
% of this spent by government	76,6	2021

Public health expenditure was 7.1% of GDP. Approximately 75% of health expenditure was public, and 1.7% stemming from voluntary health insurance payments.

Out-of-pocket payments still represent 22% of total health spendings, with over 50% accounting for dental care.

¹ Country facts - EUROSTAT ([europa.eu](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/))

² Statistics Estonia, available at: [National accounts | Statistikaamet](https://www.stat.ee/)

³ European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. Estonia Health System Summary 2024. World Health Organisation. 2024. Available here: [9789289059602-eng.pdf](https://www.observatory.euro.who.int/sites/default/files/2024-01/Estonia%20Health%20System%20Summary%202024.pdf)

Education, Training and Registration

Estonia

Undergraduate Education and Training

To enter dental school a student has to have completed secondary school (usually at the age of 18) in Estonian language.

Admission requirements include the validation of state examination (30%), as well as the completion of an academic test (20%), an entrance exam in physics and chemistry (30%) and an entrance interview (20%).

Year of data	2022
Number of schools ⁴	1
Student intake	34
Number of graduates a year	30
Gender balance (% of female students)	87%
Duration of studies	5

The dental school is situated within the Faculty of Medicine in the University of Tartu. It is publicly funded and includes free tuition.

Quality assurance for the dental school is provided by the Ministry of Education and Social Affairs.

Primary dental qualification

The primary degree which may be included in the register is "DDS Dentist".

Registration

Vocational Training (VT)

There is no mandatory vocational training for dentists in Estonia.

Cost of registration (for Estonian graduates)	15€
Cost of registration (for EU or Swiss graduates)	260€

To register in Estonia, a dentist must have a recognised degree or diploma awarded by the university, or from another EU country and have C1 level in the Estonian language.

The register is administered by the Estonian Health Board (*Terviseamet*), within the Commission for Licence (the competent authority). Full information is available at: [Registration of health professionals | Health Board](#)

Both Estonian- and foreign-trained dentists must register and can modify data through the self-service register of the Health Board (MEDRE), at: <https://medre.tehik.ee/>.

No yearly membership fee is applicable.

For diplomas acquired outside the European Union, the EEA or Switzerland, dentists must pass a conformity examination in Estonian.

Language requirements

Dentists from outside the EU are required to speak and understand Estonian at the C1 level.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Continuing education is not mandatory, but under Estonian legislation there is a general requirement to keep skills updated. Postgraduate education is delivered through the Tartu University Postgraduate Training Centre and its Institute of Dental Science, and the Estonian Dental Association.

The Estonian Dental Association is responsible for delivering the certification of competence. Further training can also be provided by a private company. The course content must however be validated in advance by the Estonian Dental Association.

Interdisciplinary courses are offered, some common to medical professionals and other paramedical professions.

Specialist Training Requirements

There is training in 3 specialties:

- Orthodontics
- Oral Maxillofacial Surgery
- Restorative dentistry (which encompasses prosthodontics, endodontics and periodontics)

Specialists carry out training in university. There is no minimum of years pre-training (working as a dentist after basic education), before entering specialist training.

Training lasts for 3 years for Orthodontics and Restorative Dentistry and 5 years for Oral Maxillofacial Surgery. All postgraduates must pass a university examination. The specialist education and training leads to a degree, "Specialist in Orthodontics", "Maxillofacial Surgeon" or "Specialist in Restorative Dentistry".

Specialists in Restorative Dentistry undertake training in endodontics, periodontics and prosthodontics.

Workforce

Dentists

Year of data	2024
Total Registered	2 001
In active practice	1 407
(Active) dentist to population ratio (per 100 000 inhab)	102
Percentage female	76%
Foreign-trained dentists**	20

The majority of dentists are self-employed and there is no reported unemployment amongst dentists in Estonia.

Some dentists practise in more than one sphere of practice.

Movement of dentists across borders

There is only small movement of foreign-trained dentists into Estonia and small share of emigrating Estonian-trained dentists. Lack of clear data on movement of dentists across borders can be noted.

Specialists

Specialists work mainly in private practice. For orthodontist specialists, patients access them by referral from other dentists.

Year of data	2022
OMFS	35
Orthodontists	66
Restorative dentists	93

Auxiliaries

The system of use of dental auxiliaries is still in the process of developing in Estonia.

Year of data	2023
Hygienists	NA
Technicians	70
Chairside assistants/nurses	1 287

Nurses and Chairside Assistants

Nurses follow 3.5 years training as *medical nurses*, and then are trained in dentistry by dentists, with institutional support. They receive a nurse's diploma, which they must register within the Healthcare Board.

Most dental chairside assistants, however, do not have a nursing education but are trained on the job at the clinic. The work-based training for assistants was established at the Tallinn Health Care College in 2019. The aim was to train dental auxiliaries without

a medical education and grant them a level 5 vocational qualification.

Their duties include assisting the dentist, such as on cross-infection control. They are salaried professionals under their employers, dental practitioners.

Hygienists

The profession of dental hygienist is not officially recognized in Estonia, and study standards and vocational training became invalid a long time ago.

Remaining dental hygienists working in Estonia mostly received their training from another country or during the period when such training was available in Estonia (32 people graduated). Dental hygienists in Estonia currently work under the responsibility of a dentist.

There is therefore no precise data regarding the number and study background of dental hygienists practising in Estonia.

The Estonian Dental Association believes that dental hygienists are needed, but no agreement has yet been reached on the content, or the extent of required training.

Currently, dental assistants are trained at the Tallinn Health Care College. The current most foreseeable idea is that, after completing assistant training, individuals could acquire additional qualifications to work as dental hygienists or as preventive care assistants. Such additional training could last from 6 months to 1 year.

All hygienists are salaried. The Insurance Fund does not pay for their service.

Dental Technicians

Student dental technicians must first carry out higher professional education. They train in Tallin Health Care College for a period of 3.5 years. They are not registered healthcare professionals.

Their duties are to prepare dental prosthetic and orthodontic appliances upon prescription of a dentist. They do not work independently with patients, except for the provision of repairs to prostheses.

Individual technicians are normally salaried and work in commercial laboratories.

There is no reported illegal activity.

Other Useful Information

Main national associations

Estonian Dental Association	Estonian Dentistry Students Association
<p><i>Eesti Hambaarstide Liit</i> Narva mnt 5-76 10117 Tallinn ESTONIA Tel: +372 5692 0004</p> <p>Email: tallinn@ehl.ee Website: https://www.ehl.ee</p>	<p><i>Eesti Hambaarstiüliõpilaste Liit</i> Raekoja plats 6 51003 Tartu ESTONIA</p> <p>Email: info@ehyl.org Website: Eesti Hambaarstiüliõpilaste Liit</p>

Competent authorities

Estonian Health Board (Terviseamet)
<p>Paldiski mnt 81 10614 Tallinn Estonia Tel: +372 794 3500</p> <p>Email: info@terviseamet.ee For the process for recognition of diplomas: liina.saar@terviseamet.ee Website: www.terviseamet.ee</p>

Dental School

University of Tartu
<p>Institute of Dentistry L. Puusepa 1a 50406 Tartu linn, Tartu linn, Tartumaa Estonia</p> <p>Tel: +372 731 9856</p> <p>Website: https://hambaarstiteadus.ut.ee</p> <p>Dentists graduating each year: Approximately 30</p>