



# Economic and Social Council

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## Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

### Forty-seventh session

#### Summary record of the 32nd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 15 November 2011, at 10 a.m.

*Chairperson:* Mr. Pillay

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*Second periodic report of Estonia*

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*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

### **Consideration of reports**

#### **(a) Reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant**

*Second periodic report of Estonia (E/C.12/EST/2 and Corr.1; E/C.12/EST/Q/2 and Add.1)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Estonia took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Bambus** (Estonia), introducing his country's second periodic report (E/C.12/EST/2), said that the employment service had been reformed in 2009, with the functions of the Labour Market Board being taken over by the Unemployment Insurance Fund in order to provide a higher-quality service to the unemployed. Expenditure on active labour market policy had tripled since 2008 and now focused on services to support employment, placement and job creation. It currently amounted to 0.44 per cent of gross domestic product. According to Eurostat, the drop in the unemployment rate between 2010 and 2011 had been the largest in the European Union (EU). The Government continued to implement active labour market measures in order to further reduce unemployment.

3. With regard to social policy, despite significant reductions in public expenditure in 2009/2010, the main social protection schemes, including family benefits and social services, had been maintained and pensions had increased by 5 per cent. Social transfers had reduced poverty for a quarter of the population in 2009. In addition, a comprehensive analysis of the gender pay gap had been undertaken and an action plan to reduce it was being introduced. The 2012–2020 development plan for children and families, which had been adopted in October 2011, aimed at increasing the well-being and quality of life of children and families. In order to further protect children's rights, the Chancellor of Justice had been acting as the children's ombudsman since the beginning of 2011. The Chancellor of Justice could now investigate cases of infringement of children's rights, prepare and disseminate opinions, recommendations and reports on all issues relating to the promotion and protection of children's rights and promote the harmonization of national legislation, regulation and practice with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

4. The Government had adopted a National Health Plan 2009–2020, which aimed to reduce mortality and morbidity rates. According to the World Health Organization, adequate systems were now in place to support people with substance dependence and to reduce harm related to drug use. Antiretroviral and methadone treatments were free for patients and the number of new cases of HIV had decreased since 2006. Awareness-raising campaigns about HIV, substance abuse and alcohol were conducted twice a year. Annual alcohol consumption had decreased from 12 litres of absolute alcohol per capita in 2008 to 9.7 litres in 2010. Moreover, under the digital prescription system introduced in 2010, doctors prescribed medication for patients using computer software and forwarded electronic prescriptions to the national database. The so-called "e-prescription" was then immediately accessible in every pharmacy at the patient's request.

5. In addition to the 2004 Gender Equality Act, the Equal Treatment Act had entered into force in early 2009. While it mainly provided better protection against discrimination on the grounds of nationality, ethnic origin, race, colour, religion, belief, age, disability and sexual orientation, it had also increased gender equality protection. The competence of the Gender Equality Commissioner had expanded pursuant to the Act, resulting in the Office of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner. The Ministry of Social Affairs was currently implementing the European Social Fund programme on "promoting gender

equality 2011–2013”, which included training, studies and a media campaign. In April 2010, the Government had adopted a plan to reduce violence during the period 2010–2014, which addressed violence against children, violence committed by minors, domestic violence, violence against women and human trafficking, including prostitution. Specific networks had been created for each area, consisting of officials and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) representing the relevant institutions. The plan addressed prevention, victim support and improvements in prosecution and law enforcement.

6. A new national curriculum was being introduced into schools between 2011 and 2013. Its aims included reducing the school dropout rate and supporting children with special educational needs. The amendments to the 2009 Vocational Educational Institutions Act had created opportunities to establish uniform bases for taking previous studies and work experience into consideration. Since 2007, significantly more State funds had been allocated to work-related adult education, with the aim of creating more diverse opportunities for study and appropriate study conditions for vulnerable groups such as the unemployed. Work-related training was provided in foreign languages, mathematics, basic science and technology, digital competence and initiative and entrepreneurship.

7. Tallinn’s nomination as the 2011 European Capital of Culture had given the city and the entire country an excellent opportunity to promote itself through culture in Europe and beyond. According to Eurostat, 2.3 per cent of public-sector expenditure in 2011 had been on culture, more than in any other EU member State. Estonian cultural heritage was being introduced into a virtual environment in archives, museums and libraries, and translations into other languages were increasing the availability and comprehensibility of relevant information for all the country’s residents. Among the current priorities were including representatives of different ethnic groups in Estonian cultural life and expanding the common sphere of information of Estonian-speaking communities and communities in which other languages were spoken. The Estonian Integration Strategy 2008–2013 aimed to promote Estonian residents’ sense of belonging in society through shared values and proficiency in the State language. Work was also under way to preserve and develop the culture of the ethnic minorities living in Estonia by studying and preserving their mother tongues and cultures, and encouraging contact between people of different citizenship and cultural backgrounds. Surveys conducted in 2010 had shown that the Estonian language skills of the non-Estonian-speaking population had improved, particularly among young people. Contact between Estonian residents of different nationalities and mother tongues had increased and Estonians had become more open to integration.

*Articles 1 to 5 of the Covenant*

8. **Ms. Barahona Riera** (Country Rapporteur) said that, since the State party did not have a national human rights institution that functioned in accordance with the Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (the Paris Principles), or a specific national human rights plan, it should examine how to bring the Office of the Chancellor of Justice into line with those Principles. She also asked whether the State party planned to maintain its current level of official development assistance (ODA).

9. Despite significant progress in tackling discrimination, much remained to be done to ensure the education, labour, health and social security rights of the Russian-speaking and Roma minorities. It would be useful to know what legislative or other steps the Government was taking to put a stop to the racial harassment suffered by such groups. She asked whether the Estonian Integration Strategy took account of respect for ethnic minorities and their cultural rights.

10. The Committee would welcome details of any specific programmes or awareness-raising campaigns to combat the strong gender stereotyping that continued to exist in the

State party and the low level of participation of women in public and political life at the highest levels of decision-making. The gender pay gap and violence against women and children remained issues of great concern. She asked whether the plan to reduce violence would include the criminalization of domestic violence and human trafficking.

11. She requested clarification of the minimum age at which young people could start working and could marry. It would be useful to learn what measures were in place to ensure that child maintenance was paid where parents separated and that children were properly cared for if their parents abandoned them.

12. She enquired what the current unemployment rate was and whether it was expected to change in 2012. Did unemployment benefits enable those without jobs to live decently? It would be interesting to know which social protection schemes and benefits had been cut owing to the financial and economic crisis. Given the scarcity of social housing, especially in Tallinn, she requested clarification of the legislation on eviction.

13. The Committee would also appreciate additional details on the availability, accessibility and affordability of sexual and reproductive health services, including for young people.

14. **Ms. Cong** commended the State party for the significant social progress it had made. However, the focus of the Estonian Integration Strategy appeared to be on language learning, whereas much remained to be done in the economic, legal and political fields. She requested data on the political participation at the local, regional and national levels of the non-Estonian mother tongue population. She also wished to know what steps the State party planned to take to raise awareness of the Integration Strategy among the Estonian-speaking population.

15. **Mr. Dasgupta** noted that, according to reports, the State party's ODA target of 0.17 per cent of gross national product for 2010 had not been reached. He asked why the target had been set so much lower than the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent, and why even the 0.17 per cent target had not been attained in practice. It would be useful to know whether the Government planned to take measures to remedy that situation over time.

16. **Mr. Ribeiro Leão** asked whether the State party provided for the social reintegration of persons who committed offences punishable under article 151 of the Penal Code concerning incitement to hatred.

17. **Mr. Sadi** asked to what extent the State party had taken account of the Committee's previous concluding observations (E/C.12/1/Add.85) and incorporated them into its policies and practices. He requested assurances from the State party that the Covenant could be invoked in domestic courts, thus forming the basis for litigation to address violations. Given the lack of case law on the direct application of the Covenant, he sought clarification of the status of the Covenant in the State party.

18. He drew attention to the critical role played by national human rights institutions in the contemporary human rights process. Without such an institution that functioned in compliance with the Paris Principles, a State's whole human rights system was deficient. He therefore called on the State party to create a national human rights institution that complied with those Principles as a matter of urgency.

19. The Committee had received reports indicating that the Equal Treatment Act did not prohibit discrimination on all the grounds stipulated in article 2, paragraph 2, of the Covenant. He therefore asked whether the State party planned to introduce a single basic law prohibiting discrimination.

20. Despite the fact that the Russian-speaking minority constituted a third of the population, those people appeared to suffer significant discrimination in the employment

field owing to the requirement for fluency in Estonian. He asked what steps the State party was taking to remedy that situation. He also wished to know whether the Government planned to implement measures to address the high unemployment rate among people with disabilities.

21. **Ms. Shin** asked how many staff worked for the Offices of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner and the Chancellor of Justice. It was only when such bodies had sufficient human and financial resources that they could work effectively. In its views on the conclusions and recommendations made under the universal periodic review process of the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/17/17/Add.1), the State party had taken the position that the Office of the Chancellor of Justice complied with the Paris Principles. She therefore urged the State party to consider obtaining accreditation for that institution from the International Coordinating Committee.

22. Despite the State party's efforts to combat gender inequality and sexual stereotyping, there was a sharp drop in women's economic participation once they married and had children. There was also strong gender segregation in studies and employment. She asked whether the State party was assessing its gender equality campaigns and other efforts in that field and, if so, what the results had been.

23. **Mr. Tirado Mejía** enquired whether the State party had implemented any measures to narrow the wage gap between women and men, which, at approximately 20 per cent, was the highest in the EU. He asked what was being done to eliminate linguistic discrimination against the Russian-speaking minority in education and the labour market, whether the State party intended to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Covenant and whether it planned to establish a truly independent national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles.

24. **Mr. Kedzia** expressed concern at the court decisions described in paragraphs 11 to 13 of the replies to the list of issues, which had variously found that international legal instruments, including the Covenant, established only rights of a general nature and did not entitle an individual to make a claim against the State, and that the Covenant was irrelevant with regard for example to determination of pension rights. He therefore requested more information on the real status of the Covenant under Estonian law, in particular whether it was directly applicable by the courts. It was troubling that the Covenant, while in principle binding on the State party, was apparently not being applied by the courts.

25. He welcomed the State party's efforts to eliminate discrimination through legislation and specific programmes but wondered whether any attempt had been made to undertake a qualitative analysis of whether those steps had had the desired effect. He noted the delegation's position that the Office of the Chancellor of Justice, as an independent officer elected by Parliament, met the conditions for a national human rights institution as set out in the Paris Principles. He requested more information on the role of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner. The Commissioner was appointed by the Minister of Social Affairs; he would welcome details of the process of appointment, in particular whether representatives of NGOs and civil society were involved. More information would be appreciated on any mechanisms for evaluating the work of those institutions with a view to enhancing compliance with the Paris Principles.

26. **Ms. Sander** (Estonia) acknowledged that there was no general and comprehensive law banning discrimination but pointed out that the Constitution guaranteed equality before the law for all and prohibited discrimination in all its forms. The Equal Treatment Act specifically prohibited certain types of discrimination but that did not preclude extension of the principle of equal treatment to areas not set out in the Act. The Public Service Act specified areas where discrimination was prohibited but the Supreme Court had, for example, ruled that in a case involving an employee's right to participate in an employees'

association the guarantees contained in the Equal Treatment Act would by extension also prohibit discrimination in that context.

27. She said that there was currently one special adviser working in the Office of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner and there were approximately 50 staff members in the Office of the Chancellor of Justice. In addition, the Gender Equality Department of the Ministry of Social Affairs had about 10 staff members, who cooperated closely with the Commissioner and the Chancellor. She explained that the Commissioner was chosen through an open competition process and appointed from a list of qualified candidates by a committee made up of representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs; civil society and NGOs played no role in selecting the candidate.

28. The Ministry of Social Affairs organized awareness-raising activities and campaigns aimed at promoting gender equality. Given the short-term nature of those campaigns, however, it was difficult to evaluate their impact. Better results were expected from efforts to provide training about the Gender Equality Act to employers and employee representatives with a view to progressively improving gender equality in the workplace. Guides and commentaries on application of the Act had been prepared for lawyers, judges and victims' advocates.

29. Measures had also been implemented to help men and women balance family and work responsibilities, for example by providing more flexible and affordable childcare, which would be of particular benefit to women, many of whom had to leave employment for a period after giving birth. The Ministry was also working to increase awareness of the need for both parents to share family responsibilities, which should allow more women to participate freely in the labour market. Her Government understood the importance of inculcating the principle of gender equality in children at an early age and had therefore developed teaching materials aimed at promoting discussion of gender equality and provided training on gender issues to teachers.

30. A study of the causes of the wage gap between men and women had been undertaken with a view to identifying targeted measures to address that situation. It was too early to measure the impact of efforts to reduce the gap but she said that every four years a gender equality survey was undertaken to evaluate awareness of gender equality and the persistence of gender stereotyping; that would provide an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of steps taken to promote equality.

31. Parliament had proposed that the Government should develop an action plan to eliminate the gender wage gap, which was currently being drafted. Her Government's gender equality measures were often undertaken in cooperation with international partners, including the EU. It had, for example, requested funding from the Government of Norway for the promotion of gender equality during the period 2012–2015.

32. **Mr. Bambus** (Estonia) said that his Government would continue to work to eliminate the gender wage gap. He noted that in recent years men had been shouldering more responsibility for household tasks, including child-rearing. Progress had also been made in the area of gender stereotyping in the labour market, with more women choosing careers traditionally considered to be male preserves.

33. **Ms. Soll** (Estonia), with regard to education, explained that following the first nine years of basic education students could choose to go on to vocational training institutions or upper secondary schools. There continued to be gender stereotyping in the choices made by boys and girls with regard to both vocational training following the basic education cycle, where boys dominated, and the more services-related specialties preferred by girls following secondary school. All study options were, however, open to everyone and progress was being made towards achieving greater gender balance.

34. Recognizing the need to address gender stereotypes in career choices at an early age, her Government was providing gender-awareness training to teachers and had developed a new curriculum aimed at encouraging girls to study such non-traditional subjects as science, mathematics and technology. Efforts were also being made to allow students to choose more services-related specialties following the basic education cycle as well as offer more technical training opportunities following completion of secondary studies.

35. She stressed that there was no discrimination in the area of education against the Russian-speaking population, who had the right to education in Russian for the entire basic education cycle. As for the Roma population, she said that there were fewer than 100 children in the school system whose mother tongue was Roma or who spoke Roma at home. Approximately half of them were in programmes for children with special needs. The most important single factor affecting Roma children's success rate in school seemed to be poor writing skills in Estonian. Teachers were provided with training on how to identify students experiencing difficulty and on strategies to assist them. Efforts were made to impress upon parents and children the importance of attending and succeeding at school. In order to stimulate interest in education among specific groups the Ministry of Education provided support for the education of linguistic minorities in their mother tongue.

36. The Integration Strategy included a programme to support language learning in formal and informal settings and fostered activities targeting young people in order to strengthen communication and understanding between Estonians and Russians and persons of other cultural backgrounds and mother tongues. Moreover, the new national curriculum clearly stated that all students should have good communication skills not only in languages but in interacting with persons from other cultures and linguistic backgrounds. She could not recall whether the Integration Strategy contained clear indicators, but a priority indicator to be achieved by 2013 was the measurement and monitoring of levels of tolerance.

37. The Estonian language policy requirement was not based on nationality and was compulsory only for persons working in public services. The language test was intended for persons who had completed less than 60 per cent of their studies in Estonian.

38. With regard to the implementation of the Committee's previous recommendations on the education of minorities and human rights education, there were clear learning objectives in the new national curriculum designed to raise awareness of human rights among young people. As for the education of minorities, there was no intention to close Russian-language schools at the basic education or preschool level, and private schools were free to choose their language of instruction. The Government provided financial support to train teachers to teach Estonian as a second language and supply teaching materials for schools that did not have Estonian as the language of instruction.

39. **Mr. Bambus** (Estonia) said that Estonia took the Committee's recommendations very seriously. It had established many new institutions and amended its legal instruments in recent years in an effort to improve the lives of all in Estonia. He clarified that the term "Russian-speaking" did not denote just Russians, but all nationalities who used the Russian language in their everyday lives.

40. **Ms. Lannes** (Estonia) said that the high rate of unemployment among persons with disabilities was of great concern. Since the previous report, the Government had taken steps to improve the situation, including: introduction of the 2009 Equal Treatment Act, which prohibited discrimination on grounds of disability; introduction of a special social benefit for persons with disabilities who were already working, in order to cover employment-related costs such as transportation, equipment and carers; continued payment of incapacity benefit for persons with disabilities even when employed; partial reimbursement of social tax by the Government to companies employing persons with disabilities; extra holiday

entitlement for persons with disabilities, paid for by the State; and special employment facilities for persons with disabilities such as wage subsidies for employers, financial support for adapting work premises and equipment, support for job interviews and provision of carers in the workplace. In addition to legislative changes, long-term programmes to promote the employment of persons with disabilities had been launched with assistance from the European Social Fund, including awareness-raising campaigns through the media, information materials and sheltered work programmes for persons with special psychological needs. Ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was a Government priority.

41. **Mr. Seilenthal** (Estonia), responding to questions regarding the establishment of an independent human rights institution in line with the Paris Principles, said the Government held the view that, as a small country, Estonia should not have too many separate institutions. The most suitable institution was the Office of the Chancellor of Justice, which had a clearly defined status and was truly independent. The Office had indicated, however, that it was not interested in taking on additional functions and applying for accreditation and the Government had failed to convince it otherwise. He was unaware of any racist organizations in Estonia, but if the concern related to organizations that might have extremist components, the police was dealing with the issue. He was also unaware of any food programme for the children of separated families, but Estonia offered free school meals to children for the first eight years of school. In response to a question on social housing, he said no country in the world had more social housing than needed. He was not aware of a particular problem regarding eviction but, where a rental agreement was not observed, the tenant could be evicted after a court process. On integration, he pointed out that Estonia had granted citizenship to over 150,000 persons over the past 17 years, representing an unprecedented increase of 15 per cent in citizenship holders; at the same time, the number of persons with undetermined citizenship continued to fall. All Estonian citizens had the right to political participation, irrespective of nationality. With regard to ODA, the 0.7 per cent target was a very ambitious one, which many countries would not achieve. Estonia had nonetheless kept up its development assistance contributions during a very severe economic crisis, with two thirds of its contributions going through the EU. It was ranked among the top 35 donors, which was remarkable for such a small country. Concerning the application of international conventions by domestic courts, it was not in their competence to apply such instruments directly; the principle observed was that it was for the State and the legislature to ensure that national legislation was in conformity with international conventions and the domestic courts applied the national law.

42. **Mr. Bambus** (Estonia) said that the Ministry of Justice had already initiated a process for amending current legislation on human trafficking.

43. **Ms. Sander** (Estonia) said that information had already been provided to the Committee on the development plan for violence reduction 2010–2014, which was now being implemented. It covered violence committed against or by children, domestic violence and violence against women, and human trafficking, including prostitution. The sections on domestic violence and human trafficking provided for preventive measures and measures to support victims. They included improving general dissemination of information on the issues and on prevention; revising school textbooks; inclusion of human rights and equality in school curricula and dissemination of information materials in schools; updating ministry and youth centre websites to provide information on domestic violence and human trafficking prevention and victim support; empowerment training for girls; research on the reasons for domestic violence and victims' needs; improving data collection from women's shelters and shelters for human trafficking victims; training of teachers, social and youth workers, medical practitioners and other specialists on prevention and victim support; establishing a rehabilitation centre for women victims of sexual exploitation; and setting up a trafficking hotline. Although no specific legislation existed to

deal with domestic violence, several articles in different legislation covered aspects that encompassed domestic violence.

44. **Mr. Dasgupta** asked for specific figures for Estonia's development cooperation and enquired on which list Estonia had been ranked among the top 35 ODA donor countries. He noted that few countries were expected to attain the 0.7 per cent target.

45. **Mr. Riedel** said that the response to the questions on the establishment of a national human rights institution was unsatisfactory. All that was needed was for the Government to change the legal basis of the Office of the Chancellor of Justice to bring it into line with the Paris Principles so that the accreditation process could take place. He asked what steps had been taken since June 2011 to implement the recommendations on the issue made during the universal periodic review process.

46. **Ms. Shin** asked why the State party was reluctant to establish a national human rights institution. That would not place a further burden on the Chancellor of Justice, and joining the community of national institutions would contribute to the protection of human rights. Regarding domestic violence, she noted that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had also recommended that Estonia should have separate legislation on that matter, and that in the State party's replies to the list of issues it made no distinction between different forms of violence. It was important to have separate legislation for domestic violence and violence in general because the causes and consequences were different. She asked whether data were collected separately to enable the police or the prosecutor's office to distinguish between domestic and other forms of violence. Action was needed to change the behaviour of aggressors so as to prevent domestic violence from recurring.

47. **Mr. Abashidze** asked for more information on the precise status and applicability of the Covenant under Estonian law. He wished to know what measures, strategies and plans existed to improve the situation and rights of the Russian-speaking minority.

48. **Mr. Kedzia** asked whether there was any institutional linkage between the Chancellor of Justice and the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner. He reiterated his concern at the courts' position that the Covenant established only rights of a general nature and was not directly applicable. Failure to take the Covenant into consideration in effect blocked access to the entire jurisprudence of the Committee, and he urged the State party to ensure that the courts took international legal instruments into account when dealing with complaints against the State by individuals.

49. **Ms. Barahona Riera** asked for additional information on minorities and any discrimination they might experience, for instance in education and the labour market. She urged the State party to criminalize the various forms of domestic violence and amend or complement legislation to include new manifestations of violence. Estonia should also give further consideration to ratifying the Optional Protocol.

50. **Mr. Seilenthal** (Estonia) said that Estonia's development cooperation amounted to 0.1 per cent of gross national product and had been maintained at that level despite the severe economic crisis. Given that the Chancellor of Justice essentially functioned as a national human rights institution, he questioned the value of establishing a second very similar body. However, the Committee's concern would be conveyed to the Government.

#### *Articles 6 to 9 of the Covenant*

51. **Mr. Martynov**, referring to unemployment statistics in the report (E/C.12/EST/2, para. 174 and figure VIII), asked what measures the State party was considering to reduce regional and ethnic disparities; whether additional and more recent data were available, in particular on single mothers and older women; and what the effects had been of the

amendment to the Employment Contracts Act that prohibited termination on the grounds of a person's age. He requested further information on the real growth of unemployment benefits, the grounds for denying a person such benefits, and the availability of day-care facilities for children aged 1 to 5. He wondered if the Labour Inspectorate dealt with violations of the Gender Equality Act and what authority it had to enforce compliance with the Act. He also asked why Estonia had not ratified Council of Europe Convention No. 200 on the avoidance of statelessness in relation to State succession.

52. **Mr. Texier** asked whether prison inmates who were forced to work were paid; if so, whether the wages were commensurate with those they would receive outside prison; and if they were entitled to social security benefits. He requested data on career prospects for women, beyond the issue of pay equity. He asked if the minimum wage was sufficient to live on and whether the Labour Inspectorate had the requisite staff to fulfil its inspection and advisory mandate. He wondered what the legal exceptions were to the right to strike, whether the definition of essential services was not too broad, and why the unionization rate was so low.

53. **Ms. Barahona Riera** requested further data on retirement and the effects of raising the statutory retirement age, specifically on reducing poverty among the elderly. She asked in which areas social spending had been cut as a result of the economic crisis.

54. **Ms. Shin** asked for information on any legal provisions regarding sexual harassment in the workplace and said that the principle of equal pay for equal work should also apply to work of equal value.

*Articles 10 to 12 of the Covenant*

55. **Mr. Ribeiro Leão** asked for further details on the methodology used for calculating the population living below the absolute and relative poverty lines, in particular the origin of the data.

56. **Mr. Riedel** asked what steps were being taken to improve the quality of groundwater and reach full biological treatment of wastewater, and for comments on any difficulties encountered in the area of waste management.

57. **Mr. Sadi** said he was surprised by the high rate of reported physical and emotional abuse among Estonians aged 15 to 74, and enquired what the cause was. He also asked what steps the State party, as a source country, had taken to combat trafficking in persons, and whether there were any measures to repatriate, rehabilitate and support victims, in particular girls.

58. **Mr. Martynov**, noting that, despite a decrease, the number of households and children living below the poverty line was still high, asked what effective measures the State party intended to take and whether there was a national strategy for long-term poverty reduction. He requested explanations as to why the number of employed children aged 13 to 15 had increased despite the entry into force for Estonia of the International Labour Organization Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138).

59. **Ms. Barahona Riera** asked what was the minimum working age in all sectors and the minimum age for marriage.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*