

Special evening lecture

“History of and present situation in Estonia”



Wed 23th Aug. 2023, 20h30 at DELTA

Piret Ehin & Arnulf Quadt

CERN School of Computing 2023, University of Tartu, Estonia



Introduction

This year, Estonia is our host country

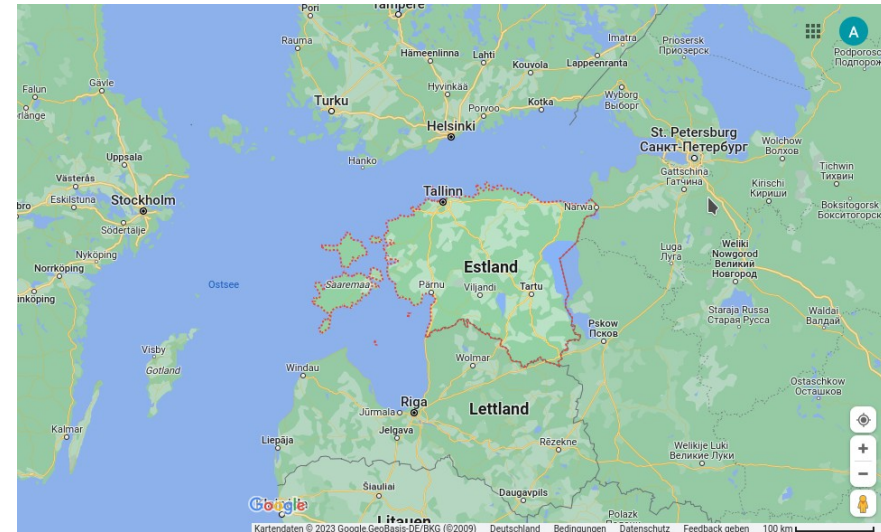
In northern Europe, next to Baltic Sea

Today in the news as

... European capital of culture 2024, member of EU and NATO ...

... one of three Baltic states neighbouring Belarus or Russia, threatened by war

Let's have a look at Estonia history, how did we get here?



The early times

Populated since 10.000 BC

First humans settled in the region around 8.500 BC (end of glacial era)

Neolithic period marked by ceramics (oldest finds from ~4.900 BC)

Bronze age (1.800 BC to 500 BC)

borders between Finnic peoples and Balts develop

Iron age (500 BC to 450 AD)

Fortresses were built, influence of the Roman Empire (coins, jewelery)

Closer mainland ties with southern areas,

islands connect to neighbours by sea,

Three tribal dialects develop, formation of identity

Early middle ages

Name "Estonia" occurs as "Aestii" by Tacitus (1st century AD)

Parish and county structures develop

Christianized in 1193-1217 by Northern Crusades

The middle ages

Danish Estonia (1219)

Northern Estonia conquered by Danish crusaders (King Waldemar II)

Swedish coastal settlements (1294 → minority of Estonian Swedes)

- also in Haapsalu and Tallinn

Terra Mariana

In 1227, indigenous stronghold of Estonia island Saaremaa christianized
Ecclesiastical state Terra Mariana established

Territory divided btw Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order
(Bishopric of Dorpat) and the Bishopric of Ösel-Wiek

Northern part of Estonia in possession of Denmark

Tallinn received Lübeck rights and joined Hanseatic League at end of 13th century

Low-Germany speaking upper class ruled Estonia,

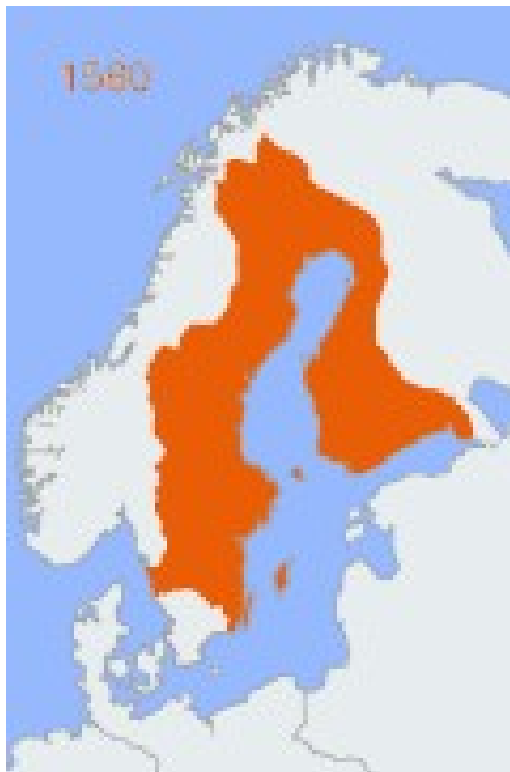
Baltic Germans governing elite

Reformation from 1517 – 1600 (by local and Swedish authorities)

Baltic German elite promoted Lutheranism, language, education, religion,
politics

Swedish control

During Livonia war in 1561, northern Estonia submitted to Swedish control (protection against Russia and Poland), Southern Estonia under control of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth



In 1625, mainland Estonia entirely under Swedish rule, administratively divided between provinces of Estonia in north and Livonia in southern Estonia and northern Latvia (division persisted until early 20th century)
 In 1631, Gustavus II Adolphus of Sweden established University of Tartu/Dorpat

First Russian control

1710: Sweden's defeat by Russia in Great Northern War

Russian rule over Estonia and Livonia

Legal system, Lutheran church, local governments, education remained German until late 19th century, partially until 1918

Russian era from 1720 to First World War

German elites owned land and business, Russian imperial authorities

In 1819, abolishment of serfdom / slavery

In 1861, beginning of national awakening: literature, songs, festivals ...

In 1889, central government sponsored Russification

In 1917, Estonia emerged as a unified political entity

February 1917 revolution in Russia

Russia granted national autonomy to unified Estonia in April

Provision parliament elected, coup d'état in Nov 1917 by Bolshevik

Feb 1918, occupation by German army, red army retreats to Soviet Russia

Inbetween Estonian Declaration of independence

Nov 1918, withdrawal of German troops

1918 – 1920: Estonian war of Independence, territory cleared of Red Army

Feb 1920, Russia renounced all rights to the territory, constitution on Estonia

Estonia and the Soviet Union

1920 – 1939: interwar period, 22 years of independence

Cultural autonomy to minority groups

1930 antiparliament movement

1933 referendum: parliamentary system replaced by presidential form

1934, coup d'etat by Päts → new head of state

1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact divides Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland between Germany and Soviet Union (→ Estonia)

Soviet military bases in Estonia, Baltic Germans evacuated to Germany

1940, occupation by and annexed/incorporation in the Soviet Union

Not recognised by USA and others

July 1941, Nazi Germany invaded Estonia, greeted with open arms

But no independence

In Sep 1944, German units pulled out of Tallinn,

re-occupied by Soviet Red Army

Estonian Swedes flee in small boats to island of Gotland

1944-91: Soviet Estonia (including Stalinism)

Independent Estonia

Under president Gorbachev:

16. Nov. 1988: Estonian Sovereignty Declaration

Law of economic independence, new parties form

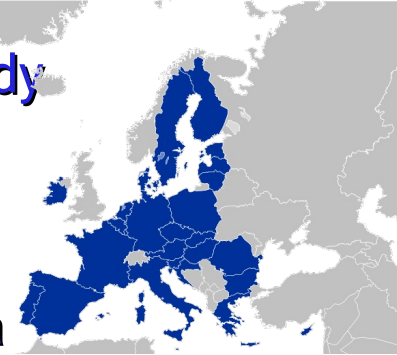
Supreme Soviet transformed into an authentic lawmaking body

Estonia becomes official language

1991 referendum of independence (64% in support),

recognised by Russia on 25th Aug 1991

31st Aug 1994, armed forces of Russia withdraw from Estonia



1996 International Cooperation Agreement (ICA) with CERN

1998 accession negotiations with European Union, joined in 2004

Shortly after joined defence alliance NATO



2005: Estonia signs a border treaty with Russia, not ratified by Russia

2011: Estonia joins the Euro zone

2021: associate CERN memberstate

...

2024: Tartu - European Capital of Culture



Independent Estonia

Estonia-Russia relations stay tense

Russian influence operations from complex system of financial, political, economic and espionage activities in the Republic of Estonia

Covered by "sphere of influence" doctrine

Provoked a split in Estonia society amongst Russian speakers

190 nationalities

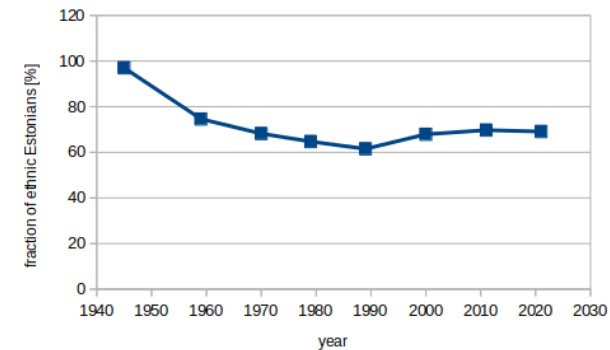
Estonians 69.1%

Russians 23.6%

Ukrainians 2.1%

Belarusians 0.9%

Finns 0.6%



2007: NATO establishes Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence



Conclusions & questions

In history, connections to Sweden, Germany, Russia ...

Strong connections between the three Baltic states

Logistics highly influenced by Baltic Sea (now mainly NATO territory)

Fully integrated into western world

Exposed NATO member state, bordering Russia,

Baltic states bracketed between Kalinigrad and Russia/Belarus

- Can each country decide freely on their membership in economic, political or military consortia or alliances?
- Does Russia need an “area of influence” to protect itself?
- Does Russia need to protect Ethnic Russians in other countries
- Does Russia need to protect Russian speaking population on other countries
- What defines a national identify (language, culture, history ...)?

Legal
continuity

1918-1940:
independence

1940-41: Soviet
occupation

1941-1944: Nazi
occupation

1944-1991: Soviet
occupation

since 1991:
independence

since 2004: members
of EU and NATO

