



# Lawyers training systems in the EU

## Estonia

Information provided by: **Estonian Bar Association (Eesti Advokatuur)**

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### DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM FOR LAWYERS in Estonia

#### 1. Access to the Profession

Higher education / university education	YES
A law degree is compulsory	YES
Steps to becoming a fully-fledged lawyer:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examination /Assessment of candidate by the bar or by a committee established by the bar</li> <li>• Evaluation of the candidate and acceptance by a law firm (Attorneys may provide legal services only through a law firm.</li> <li>• Completion of an induction period</li> <li>• Registration with the Bar (after passing the attorney-at-law examination or if one has passed the examination and has practiced as an assistant to an attorney-at-law for at least <b>3 years</b>)</li> </ul> <p>In Estonia <b>attorneys-at-law are fully fledged lawyers.</b>            Since the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2013 there are 2 types of members of the Bar Association: <b>attorneys-at-law</b> and <b>assistants to the attorney-at-law.</b>            Assistants are members of the Estonian Bar Association who can practice under the supervision of an Attorney-at-law.</p> <p><b>Attorneys-at-law</b> can be admitted to the Bar Association if:</p>

- they have passed the attorney-at-law examination;
- they have passed the examination and are Doctors of Law (PhD holders);
- they have been attorneys-at-law and join the Bar Association within **5 years** after exclusion from Bar Association (according to the Bar Association Act § 36 par.1 p.1 or 4, an attorney may be excluded from the Bar Association following resolution of the Bar Association if he has submitted an application or if he has not practiced as an attorney for more than **3 consecutive years** due to health reasons or other reasons);
- they have worked for at least **3 years** as judges, notaries or prosecutors may join Bar Association within **5 years** after leaving their post (or as supreme judge, judge of the ECJ, of the General Court of the EU, [Chancellor of Justice](#) – Oiguskanstler (The Chancellor of Justice in Estonia combines the function of the general body of petition and the guardian of constitutionality. Such a combined competence is unique internationally)

#### **Assistants to attorneys-at-law – admission to the Bar:**

They must submit an application (copy of passport, photos, personal data form, copy of law degree, list of topics covered during academic studies, academic report and any other university diplomas)

#### **General requirements for admission to the Bar Association:**

- Active legal capacity;
- Resident of Estonia or citizen of Estonia or of another member of the EU;
- Requirements of judicial education (Courts Act § 47 section 1 paragraph 1 Courts Act: § 47. Requirements for judges:  
(1) A citizen of the Republic of Estonia may be appointed as a judge if he or she:  
1) has acquired in the field of law at least an officially certified Master's degree, a corresponding qualification for the purposes of subsection 28 (22) of the Republic of Estonia Education Act or a corresponding foreign qualification;
- Qualifications obtained in another member state of the EU, recognized under [Bar Association Act](#) (§ 65);

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oral and written proficiency in Estonian;</li> <li>• Honesty and moral character.</li> </ul>
Alternative routes to the profession:	YES	<p>Professionals having worked for at least 3 years as judges, notaries or prosecutors may join the Bar Association and become lawyers within five years after leaving their post (or as supreme judge, judge of the ECJ, of the General Court of the EU, Chancellor of Justice.</p>
<b>2. Training during induction period</b>		
Is there an induction period?	YES	<p>Legal basis:</p> <p><a href="#">Bar Association Act</a></p>
Compulsory	YES	<p>Set length:</p> <p><b>3 years</b></p> <p>Fully-fledged attorneys are attorneys-at-law. A member of the Bar Association may become an attorney-at-law on the basis of a written application if he/she has passed the attorney-at-law examination and he or she has practiced as an assistant of the attorney-at-law for at least three years.</p> <p>Assistants to the attorneys-at-law are also members of the Bar. After this <b>3-year</b> period person does not have to pass the attorney-at-law exam, he or she may continue practicing as assistant of the attorney-at-law without time limitation under the supervision of an attorney-at-law.</p>
Types of structures responsible for organising induction training		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bars - through Schools of Legal Practice.</li> </ul> <p>The Bar must sign an agreement with at least one University in order to ensure compliance with legal requirements regarding professional competence, suitability or qualifications and teacher qualification. The Bar is responsible for the day to day organization of the induction period training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universities (public or private). Universities can provide training by signing an agreement with at least one Bar, in order to ensure the internship period during the induction period (apprenticeship). The University is responsible for</li> </ul>

		<p>the day-to-day organization of the induction period training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Universities (public or private) together with Bars through Schools of Legal Practice. The Bar, the School of legal practice and the University are responsible for the day to day organization of the induction period training.</li> </ul>
Form of induction training		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apprenticeship supervised by a private practice</li> <li>Apprenticeship supervised by a Bar</li> <li>Training on non-legal professional skills (e.g. communication, management of an office, etc.)</li> <li>Training on legal professional skills (e.g. drafting claims, working with clients, etc.)</li> </ul>
Entrance exam / check before induction period	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check / verification of diploma</li> <li>Written application / evaluation</li> <li>Entrance examination</li> </ul>
Set curriculum during induction period	NO	
Specificities regarding EU law and linguistic training:	NO	
Induction period divided into different stages	NO	
Post-induction period assessment / exam	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through reports from tutors</li> <li>Through written exams</li> <li>Through oral exams</li> <li>Interview</li> </ul>
<b>3. Continuous training system</b>		
Differentiation between continuous training / specialisation training		<p>NO</p> <p>There is no official specialization training system in Estonia</p>
Obligations regarding continuous training	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compulsory training obligations as decided by state law</li> <li>Compulsory training obligations as stated in the internal regulations of the Bar Association</li> </ul> <p><b>Legal basis:</b> In English: <a href="#">Estonian Bar Association Act and Internal Rules</a> Attorneys-at-law and assistants to attorneys-at-</p>

		<p>law are obliged to undergo periodical continuous training. Every 5 years the bar controls whether those obligations have been fulfilled.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More specifically, according to the Estonian Bar Association Act § 34 an attorney-at-law and a assistant of the attorney-at-law -if five years have passed since he/she passed the last attorney's examination - are required to submit information concerning the in-service training completed by the person during the assessment period to the professional suitability assessment committee.</li> </ul>
Obligations regarding specialization training	NO	Specialization is not mentioned either by the state law or internal regulations
Obligations regarding learning foreign languages	NO	
Obligations regarding EU law content in relation to continuous / specialisation training	No	
<b>4. Accreditation systems and training providers</b>		
Possibility for accreditation	NO	There is no possibility of accreditation in the Estonian training system
Number of training providers offering accredited continuous training activities	N/A	
Type of training providers developing accredited continuous training activities	N/A	
<b>Activities and methods</b>		
Type of training activities accepted under the obligations of continuous training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending face to face training sessions</li> <li>• Completing distance training sessions</li> <li>• Completing e-learning modules</li> <li>• Watching a webinar</li> <li>• Carrying out blended-learning activities</li> </ul>	<p>Participation in training activities in another Member State:</p> <p>Yes, it can count towards training obligations but it depends on the type of activities offered in the other member</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending training conferences</li> <li>• Participating in training activities as trainer or teacher</li> <li>• Writing/publishing</li> </ul>	state – Requirements for training activities in Estonia also apply to activities in another member state
<b>5. Supervision of training activities</b>		
Organisations involved in supervising continuous training activities	Bar	The assessment is carried out by a <b>professional suitability assessment committee.</b>
Supervision process	<p>A credit system is used to assess the successful completion of the continuous training period.</p> <p>1 training credit corresponds to 1 hour of continuous training</p> <p>1 year of assessment period corresponds to 10 continuous training credits.</p> <p>5 year-assessment period corresponds to 80 continuous training credits</p> <p>The accreditation process is based on <a href="#">“Bases and Procedure of Continuous Training of the Estonian Bar Association”</a></p>	

Source: Pilot Project - European Judicial Training: "Lot 2 – Study on the state of play of lawyers training in EU law", carried out by the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) and the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA)