

Illegal mass immigration



Threat assessment: The risk of mass immigration to Estonia is low, and it is unlikely to develop into a crisis within the next two years. Compared with the previous assessment, the risk level has decreased – from very likely to unlikely.

At present, the threat of mass immigration to Estonia is considered low. However, it must be acknowledged that Russia has the capacity to create migratory pressure at Estonia's eastern border. In preparing its capabilities, the Police and Border Guard Board (PPA) takes into account the obligation set out in the migration package, which requires the ability to process 187 individuals per day and 748 per year. From the state's perspective, drawing on the experience of the Ukraine crisis, it is possible to manage a situation in which up to 50,000 migrants arrive in Estonia over two to three months, provided that the country of origin of the refugees is cooperative. At the same time, crises are also defined as deliberate and systematic migration attacks directed at Estonia's border, with the aim of exhausting the resources of the security authorities. Such events create the need to localise, register, identify, accommodate or detain, and if necessary, deport a large number of people.

Although pressure from illegal migration on the EU's external borders decreased by almost 40% in 2024 compared with the previous year, it cannot be claimed that the EU has become a less attractive destination for migrants. The reduction was supported by additional border controls and cooperation with third countries. Nevertheless, pressure on the EU's external borders persists, although it is unlikely to increase significantly.

It is beyond doubt that Russia's desire to continue and expand its influence operations and hybrid activities at the EU's eastern border will remain in the future.

THREATS

- ✓ Although the situation at Estonia's border is relatively calm as of spring 2025, it could change at any moment. Russia has both the capacity and the interest to continue hybrid operations (including migration attacks) and divisive activities aimed at Western states.
- ✓ Russia's actions have so far shown that it is creative in planning and carrying out such operations, and constant testing of Estonia's border guard capabilities and responses continues at the eastern border.

- ✓ Russia and Belarus remain attractive to migrants thanks to simplified visa regimes and direct flight connections. Migration pressure persists especially at Estonia's eastern border, which now also sees migrants arriving from Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia.
- ✓ Even though Russia has avoided creating a larger flow of migration towards Estonia's border, Estonia's eastern frontier and the events taking place there remain part of Russia's broader strategy aimed at undermining unity in Estonian society and in Western countries more widely.

ACTIONS

- ✓ Estonia is creating a crisis reserve of 1,000 reservists, composed of former military police conscripts, whose task will be to assist the police in the event of a migration attack or domestic unrest.
- ✓ Situational awareness is ensured through the assessment of internal and external threats in order to forecast the likelihood of such events.
- ✓ Risk communication is conducted, and the public is informed about the causes of migration and the dangers associated with it.
- ✓ Schengen compensatory measures are implemented to check the legality of individuals' stay throughout the territory of Estonia.
- ✓ Border control is strengthened by the development of the eastern border infrastructure.
- ✓ The guarding of the border and of critical sites is further developed.

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