

Risks

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Previously assessed risks

Here you will find risks whose probability was last assessed before 2025.

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Organised crime



Risk assessment (assessed 2024): The trend of organised crime posing a threat to national security remains stable. There is an increased probability of the illegal proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and strategic goods.

CAUSES

Organised crime networks are particularly active in cross-border drug, cyber, economic, and environmental crime, as well as human trafficking, the provision of criminal services, and support for terrorism. There is an increasing shift towards white-collar crime (e.g. fraud). Organised crime networks are flexible, evolving, and adapting, while avoiding being investigated by law enforcement.

- ✓ Two thirds of serious and organised crime offenders in Europe are regularly involved in corrupt activities. More than 80% of criminal networks use legitimate business structures.
- ✓ Around 60% of criminal networks operating in the EU use violence in their criminal activities. Violent crime has become more common in Europe.
- ✓ Around 40% of criminal networks operating in the EU are linked to illicit drug trafficking, which remains a major source of income. Drug trafficking is also one of the main sources of income for organised crime in Estonia.
- ✓ The line between cybercrime and other crime is blurring. Virtual cyberspace is being exploited to commit so-called classic crimes such as fraud, selling drugs, and more.

- ✓ Although organised crime maintains a low profile in Estonia, random and spontaneous violent crimes are still committed. Proceeds are also earned from economic crime, human trafficking, and theft.

THREATS

- ✓ The level of organised crime in Estonia has remained relatively low. A future threat is the possible expansion of international criminal networks into Estonia.
- ✓ The classic organisational cultures of organised crime are being replaced, including in Estonia, by modern criminal associations developing flexible management styles. With this change comes the risk that criminal activity will become more effective and harder to deter, leading to increased financial losses.
- ✓ Organised criminals are increasingly moving into cyberspace. This carries the risk that more and more vulnerable groups in society, with below average digital literacy, will become victims.
- ✓ Due to the war in Ukraine, weapons and ammunition may also fall into the hands of Estonian criminal groups, which could threaten the security of society.
- ✓ The biggest negative impact of organised crime on society comes from drug trafficking, which is the biggest source of income for criminal organisations and continues to pose a threat to public health.
- ✓ Due to our proximity to Russia, which has a high level of organised crime, we also must consider potential impacts from the east. The special services of the Russian Federation use criminals and organised crime to gather cross-border intelligence, undermine the target state, and given the chance, stage a coup.

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[Prosecutor's Office Yearbooks](#)

European Council: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-fight-against-crime/> **[opens in a new tab](#)**

INTERPOL: <https://www.interpol.int/Crimes/Organized-crime> **[opens in a new tab](#)**

Transport accident on the road



Risk assessment (assessed 2024): The probability of a major accident (ten or more victims) is low. The risk assessment has not changed compared to the previous risk analysis.

According to the Estonian Motor Insurance Bureau, there were 34,314 motor insurance cases in Estonia in 2023, of which 1,724 (1.5% more than in the previous year) were traffic accidents with injuries or fatalities. The increase is mainly due to an increase in the number of accidents involving personal light electric vehicles. Harju County, including the city of Tallinn, stands out with the highest number of accidents.

Major accidents (ten or more victims) account for less than 0.01% of the total number of accidents. There was a total of six such accidents between 2017 and 2023.

According to statistics, 26% of people injured in transport accidents were in a serious condition and required hospital treatment for more than 24 hours. The rest did not need prolonged treatment.

CAUSES AND THREATS

- ✓ **human factor**, including negligence, disregard of safety rules, or violation of traffic laws.
- ✓ **technical factors**, including the use of technically unsound means of transport or unforeseen technical breakdowns.
- ✓ severe or unexpected changes in **weather conditions**, increase in extreme weather events.
- ✓ continued growth in mileage.
- ✓ **self-driving cars on the road** (events caused by failures of navigation systems).
- ✓ **intelligent transport systems** (ITS) can be exploited in the future to carry out cyber-attacks or attack the systems themselves.

WORST-CASE SCENARIO

A high-speed collision between two buses.

CODE OF CONDUCT

If you are involved in an accident, or see an accident with people injured, call 112 immediately. As calmly as possible, say what has happened, what you see, where the accident happened, and answer all the questions asked by the rescue officer.

You can find comprehensive instructions on how to act in the event of a road accident on the website of the Estonian Rescue Board: [traffic accident opens in a new tab](#)

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Statistics on road accidents in Estonia opens in a new tab[Estonian Transport Administration](#)

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Marine casualty



Risk assessment*: The likelihood of a marine casualty in Estonian waters with a high number of casualties or significant environmental damage is low. Compared to the previous assessment, the risk likelihood has been raised from unlikely to low.

**In 2025, the risk of marine casualty was not assessed, but the threat of a large-scale maritime rescue event and a large-scale marine pollution were assessed separately*

Marine casualties are usually caused by **human error**. In recent years, the number of vessels in distress

has been on an upward trend, but this is mainly due to the increase in the number of recreational craft. In 2023, there were fifteen officially recorded incidents (10) or casualties (5) in Estonian waters and a total of 29 cases were recorded. The most notable of these were the unsafe approach of two vessels, R/L Elina and R/L Baltic Queen; the listing of R/L Amalie, which required the evacuation of passengers, and the collision of R/L Regula with a quay.

CAUSES AND THREATS

- ✓ Nearly 90% of marine casualties are caused **by human error**: navigation error, miscalculation, sudden manoeuvres, inadequate or incorrect assessment of hazards, inattention or distraction, misunderstandings, etc.
- ✓ **Technological causes**: failure of machinery, systems, or equipment, hull damage.
- ✓ **Adverse weather conditions**.

FACTORS INCREASING THE RISK

- ✓ **dense and intersecting** vessel traffic and **increasing traffic of recreational craft**.
- ✓ **growth in liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipments**.
- ✓ **expansion of offshore wind farm areas**.
- ✓ **trends in maritime technology**, including the use of novel, untested ship control and navigation tools in narrow and congested lanes.
- ✓ **activities of the Russian Federation**.
- ✓ **undetected movements of vessels** (AIS transmitter deactivation, GPS manipulation, etc.).
- ✓ Bunkering in more economically viable but more exposed areas, as well as fuel leaking from wrecks that have sunk decades ago (it is estimated that there are 57 environmentally hazardous wrecks in Estonian waters) **increase the risk of pollution**.

WORST-CASE SCENARIO

A collision between a passenger ship and an oil tanker in the Estonian rescue area.

CODE OF CONDUCT

If you are involved in an accident or see an accident with casualties, please report it immediately to the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC Tallinn) of the Police and Border Guard Board by calling 619 1224 or 112. As calmly as possible, say what has happened, what you see, where the accident happened, and answer all the questions asked by the rescue officer. As a passenger on a ship:

- ✓ check the locations of the assembly points and lifesaving equipment at the start of the trip.
- ✓ in case of an emergency, follow the instructions of the staff and authorities.
- ✓ go to the nearest assembly point when instructed to do so.
- ✓ take only essential items with you:

- documents and phone.

- the everyday medicines you use.

- wear warm clothes.

- ✓ Stay on board as long as possible, avoid getting into the water.

Stay calm and follow the instructions of the authorities and the emergency services.

Expand all

[Read more](#)

[Statistics on marine casualties opens in a new tab](#), Estonian Transport Administration

[Annual Overview of Marine Casualties opens in a new tab](#), Europe Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA).

Reviews of the **[Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission opens in a new tab](#)** (HELCOM)

[Website of the ferry M/S Estonia opens in a new tab](#), Safety Investigation Bureau

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