Integration programme 2000–2007

Audit Report No 2-5/04/51 30.06.2004

Summary

The State Audit Office audited the implementation of a national programme "Integration in the Estonian Society in 2000-2007" and the utilisation of funds allocated to sub-programmes within the sample. The institutions audited were the Bureau of the Minister of Population Affairs, the Minister of Cultural Affairs and the Foundation Integration of Non-Estonians.

The Foundation Integration of Non-Estonians (FINE) received 45.7 million kroons for specific purposes in 2003, 8.0 million kroons were allocated from the state budget. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs received 2.4 million kroons from the state budget.

The audit revealed that the payment of subsidies was well organised in FINE and the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

FINE and the Bureau of the Minister of Population Affairs prepared action plans for integration sub-programmes. These were used by the foundation as the basis for the development of rules of procedure and control system for the organisation of competitive project tender and payment of subsidies. Measures for the management of risks related to project funding worked.

The number of projects rejected by FINE was remarkable (approximately one third of the total number), but the audit confirmed the fact that the rejection was well-grounded. FINE had an overview of the utilisation of funds allocated to the projects. Reporting required on the use of finances worked and met its purpose.

Besides project work FINE also serves as the management unit to two centres – Language Immersion Centre and the Centre of Education Programmes – coordinating national operations of a specific area. The purpose of the activities was to offer the non-Estonians a chance to learn how to communicate freely in Estonian language while maintaining their own native language and cultural identity.

Support scheme administration costs totalled to 20% of the total funds allocated to projects in FINE. Considering the number of projects processed, amounts paid and coordinating activities through the centres this indicator could be observed as a logical outcome.

The Bureau of the Minister of Population Affairs and FINE were involved in substantial analysis of the implementation of integration programme. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs did not allocate support from the state budget to specific projects but provided activity support to cultural associations and societies of the minority nations. The state supported all the potential beneficiaries having applied for support; as a rule, none of the applicants was allocated the specific amount applied for. This means that the cultural societies did not receive the financing based on the consideration for their needs (the amount applied for was twice as big as paid). As of 2004, support is allocated to cultural association of minority nations by the Bureau of the Minister of Population Affairs.

The State Audit Office gave the following recommendations to the Minister of Population Affairs to develop the practice for the allocation of integration support:

- To develop cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications for the development of socio-economic integration;
- To develop criteria for the provision of activity support (basic funding) to the cultural association to assure equal treatment of all the potential beneficiaries.

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Answer given by the Minister of Population Affairs

The Minister explained that he has submitted a draft resolution to the Government of the Republic, appointing the representative of the Minister of Economic Affairs and Communications in the Steering Committee and also making adjustments with regard to some other ministries.

As the national integration programme for the closest years has approved a number of measures and foreign programmes, closely related to socio-economic integration, the Bureau of the Minister of Population Affairs commits to be involved in close mutual cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications.

The Bureau of the Minister of Population Affairs is currently involved in the development of criteria for the payment of activity support to cultural associations and the Minister assures that the specified criteria for the allocation of support shall be prepared and disclosed by February 2005, as latest.

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