

# Cultural Heritage in Local and Regional Social and Economic Stability

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## (killed Eestist Euroopa riikide hulgas)

Since 1993 the responsibility for cultural heritage protection and its management lies with the National Heritage Board, which operates by the Ministry of Culture. The main task of the NHB is to exercise state supervision over monuments and heritage conservation areas and maintain the national register of cultural monuments. The Board has inspectors in all 15 counties in Estonia who are responsible for the supervision of both archaeological, architectural, historical monuments and art objects. In most cases county inspectors have their offices in the regional centres (**Joonis maakonna keskustega**). County inspectors are charged with the supervision of monuments and heritage conservation areas, they issue protection obligation notices to owners of monuments, signpost monuments, issue permits for work on local cultural heritage objects and network with local authorities and inhabitants regarding heritage issues. With the exception of the two biggest towns in Estonia – Tallinn and Tartu – there is one inspector working in each county. The current financial situation and annual budget does not foresee increasing the number of staff or diminishing the present heavy workload of inspectors.

Organisationally, the Board is divided into four divisions: division of expertise, division of supervision (21 persons), division of export of cultural objects (2 persons) and administration (5). Four chief inspectors work in the division of expertise, one per each monument group. Chief inspectors are supported by six senior inspectors. County inspectors work independently of the county administrations. They are permanent employees of the Board. County inspectors report directly to the Deputy Director. Only some of the inspectors are professional archaeologists or **other specialists** ?????

The National Heritage Board is the principal government body who organises heritage conservation, local governments organise heritage conservation through the rural municipality governments and city governments. Administrative agreements have been entered with cities where cultural heritage has especially high concentration, like Tallinn, Tartu, Haapsalu, and Jõelähtme district in Harju county. The agreement foresees exchange of information and documentation between the NHB and municipal heritage conservation departments. Rural municipality governments and city governments shall maintain records of monuments in their territory, consider heritage conservation requirements arising from immovable monuments, heritage conservation areas and their protected zones in co-ordinating planning, land use and other documents, issue protection obligation notices to owners and perform other duties of the state arising from the agreement. As a rule, local municipalities in Estonia are very small, only the capital Tallinn has its own Board for Conservation and in addition, four city governments have employed archaeologists in their administration. In the case of most other cities and districts heritage specialists have been employed to manage different renovation and conservation projects. As for archaeologists, a network of voluntary monitors has been established all over the country with special rights and duties.

Estonia has over twenty four thousand movable and fixed monuments which are divided into historical, archaeological, architectural, art and technical monuments. The biggest concentration of monuments is in Estonian cities. Historical city centres of Haapsalu, Kuressaare, Lihula, Paide, Pärnu, Rakvere, Tallinn, Tartu, Valga, Viljandi and Võru, dating from the 13th – 19th centuries, are under protection (**Joonis – kaitsealadega +Rebala**).

In addition to protected city centres we also have a few heritage conservation areas. An excellent example of village planning, land cultivation and concentration of architectural and archaeological monuments is the Rebala protection area in Jõelähtme district, Harjumaa, which is also under state protection. This protection area covers the territory of 25 km<sup>2</sup>, including 15 villages and more than 300 archaeological monuments. **(kiled Rebalast)** Rebala Protection Area is the only one of its kind financed by the National Heritage Board together with the local municipality. There is a museum and cultural pathways introducing the area in Rebala.

As I mentioned before, the national register holds over 24 thousand cultural heritage objects. The information system is based on a client-server-system – a PC-network between chief inspectors and regional inspectors via modem connection and Internet (Power Builder system). The number of protected objects may, however, be much larger. Findings of cultural value belong to the state and they are deemed to be placed under temporary protection from the moment they are found. A thing may be placed under temporary protection from two weeks up to six months in order to determine whether it qualifies as monument. Some objects may have the so-called local protection that is when a local authority considers an object of local importance worthy of being protected. The NHB does not have a responsibility for such objects.

One of the alarming trends in the present cultural heritage protection is the adoption of a political decision to diminish the number of heritage objects. This is a direct threat to the cultural heritage in Estonia. The NHB has proposed to increase local protection as a possible solution, or register related heritage objects as one complex. In this way we could still have all the different objects registered, but the overall number would be smaller.

In the year 2001 the total budget of the NHB is 28,5 million kroons, 21 million of which has been allocated for the maintenance and restoration of monuments. The sum is relatively small and major renovations may therefore be carried out on very few monuments only. Additional funding is sometimes possible from local municipalities to maintain, renovate or conserve monuments under state protection. In most cases funding from local municipalities can constitute up to 25% of the state finances. A clear exception is the heritage conservation department of the Tallinn city government, whose budget for heritage work in Tallinn is as big as the budget of the NHB for the whole country. A positive sign is that the Estonian Parliament has decided to increase the allocations for cultural heritage next year by 25 million (totaling ca 53 million kroons).

An owner of a listed monument is entitled to obtain consultation and information concerning the monument free of charge from the National Heritage Board. The owner of a monument may also receive a grant from the state budget or from the rural city municipality or city budget to maintain, conserve or restore the monument or install a security and alarm system. Several churches that have suffered from continuous thefts have started to install alarm systems, often financed by the NHB.

The Heritage Conservation Act imposes restrictions and obligations to the owner of a monument or immovable located in a protected zone, but the law also foresees a compensation mechanism by reduction of the taxable value of land or exemption from land tax. The government may also offer the owner a substitution for the area where the monument is situated. In case of private small landownership large monuments such as settlement sites, graveyards etc. may considerably restrict or even exclude any use of the land for profit.

National Heritage Board issues owners Protection Obligation notices, which oblige them to preserve and protect monuments.

Often the owners are faced with several obligations and restrictions on use of the monument and the land, especially in the case of archaeological monuments. This means that the owners are often not too keen to possess a monument.

There are, however, opposite cases as well. The monastery of the Brigitian Order in Tallinn that was to a great extent destroyed by the Russians during the Livonian war in 1577 has now been returned to the order (**3 kilet kloostri**). The monastery includes historical, architectural and archaeological monuments. With the assistance of the local authority the order has started to conserve the ruins and also construct a new building in the vicinity of the ruins. It is important that the monuments are kept in active use. The best solution for a monument would be the use for which it was designed. Members of the order are also planning to build a hotel, which would secure some income for administrating the whole complex and keep it open for tourists.

Another very interesting tourist object is a meteoritic crater field in Kaali, Saaremaa - the biggest island in Estonia. This was the last giant meteorite to fall in a densely populated area. Its fall has left clear traces not only in the landscape, but also in folklore and written sources (Phyteas, Scandinavian sagas).

The meteorite with a mass of 20-80 t fell from the east at an angle of 45 degrees at a speed of 15-45 km/sec. By passing through the atmosphere the meteorite heated and broke into pieces at an altitude of 5-10 km, falling to the Earth as a meteorite shower. As a result, the main crater, 110 m in diameter and 22 m in depth, and at least eight smaller craters were formed. On the walls of the main crater a fortified settlement was founded during the Late Bronze Age. Later the crater was surrounded by a strong wall and was probably used as a place of water sacrifices. The bottom sediments of the lake Kaali are about 6 m thick and are yet waiting for discoverers to unearth their secrets. The archaeological settlement around the crater field is an integral part of the landscape.

The Kaali crater field has attracted international attention and it is included into a European Union project called European Cultural Paths. The EU project is a co-operation of five regional archaeological projects, aiming at introducing a prehistoric cultural landscape to a wide public. Rebala Protection Area is also a part of this project.

Estonia is also rich in beautiful manors, which constitute an important part of our cultural and historic heritage. The majority of manors date from the end of 18<sup>th</sup> beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century, though some originate from earlier periods. The manor complexes are attractive tourist objects that also help local development. The manors suffered greatly from negligence and mistreatment during the Soviet occupation. Many of them were rebuilt, valuable ceiling and wall paintings were destroyed etc. Most of the manors have new owners now for already 10 years who try to save the cultural values of the manors still in place. This is often very expensive and the state has made a decision to assist the owners. A national programme has been initiated to restore manors that accommodate schools. (Approximately 70 manors) (**kiled mõisakoolidest**). In many small villages the manor is the only bigger building and is therefore also used as a cultural centre, common library, Internet access etc. Local authorities are often faced with the question of whether to take children to new far-away schoolhouse, or start renovating the old historic building. Manor complexes always include a park that needs to be maintained. There are over 200 manor parks in Estonia under state protection.

The state programme for renovating old manors is initiated in co-operation with the National Heritage Board and Ministry of Education with the aim of restoring the old cultural values, but also create modern facilities for schoolchildren.

In the countryside churches have a special meaning in terms of tourist attraction. A similar state programme has been put forward to restore churches in Estonia.

Apart from the national heritage protection organisation there are also several private companies, institutions and organisations that deal with restoration, archaeological excavations and objects of art. In order to be able to work on a state monument companies need to obtain a license from the National Heritage Board. At present the NHB has issued

ca 100 licenses. Often the companies are small, consisting of one-two persons only. Bigger companies are engaged with restoration of the built heritage.

Three companies in Estonia do archaeological excavations. Professional archaeologists from the Institute of History, museums and the NHB may excavate without prior applying for a license. There are approximately 40 professional archaeologists in Estonia, five of who work at the NHB.

Voluntary organisations involved in heritage protection in Estonia include Estonian Heritage Society, Estonian Archaeological Society, and Union of Schools in Manors etc. All these organisations play an active role in promoting public knowledge about monuments. Since 1984 a heritage protection month is organised from 18 April to 18 May each year. Several seminars, conferences and public events take place each day during this month.