If we are to decide wisely, we need to be able to look ahead far enough. National spatial plan – these three words conceal in fact more than many might manage to decipher from this particular specimen of officialese at first reading. This plan is Estonia’s long-term strategy, its plan for the future.

A nation is not built for its officials but rather for its people. For that reason, we need to consider where our people are living, how they are getting about and how their lives are organised. Both now and in 10 to 20 years’ time.

If one were to ask some people what frustrates them where they are living, one of them might say that there is a railway too close to their residence. Another, that their job is too far away. A third, that there are no places in the kindergarten available at all, whereas a fourth might curse our public transport, on which it is impossible to make an early flight in the morning unless superhuman effort is applied.

This, perhaps, is a slightly simplistic approach; however, broadly speaking, it is ensuring that Estonia is liveable for its people that Estonia 2030+ lays the groundwork for: ensuring that every corner of Estonia is liveable.

Siim Kiisler
Minister for Regional Affairs
1. Important future trends impacting on Estonia’s spatial development

Given globalisation, all nations are affected by global and macro-regional factors that work their effect regardless of whether a nation itself wants it to or not. Global trends with a spatial impact that are important to Estonia include:

- The world economy’s centre of gravity shifting to Asia;
- Transition to a knowledge-based economy;
- An ageing population;
- Urbanisation;
- Growth in the influence of environmental values;
- Transition to the broad-scale utilisation of renewable energy;
- Accelerating growth in the so-called green and silver economies;  

The concepts of so-called green and silver economies generalise the future economy linked to novel social commitments. Green economy comprises many business sectors, from renewable energy, building passive housing and recycling materials through to manufacturing electric cars and producing organic food. Much of the green economy is based on biotechnology. Silver economy comprises products and services provided to the elderly to ensure that the extra life years are spent being healthy, active and secure.

Of the EU policy areas, the environmental, energy, transport and agricultural policies command a more important position in terms of spatial development.

Analysis of the interaction between the main global trends and EU policy indicates that even though certain shifts may occur in Estonia’s settlement structure, the spatial structure will remain broadly the same.

Ageing of the population in Estonia is unavoidable yet spatially uneven. Growth in the proportion of the elderly is smallest in Tallinn, Tartu and Pärnu, where younger age groups are predominant amongst immigrants. Ageing of the population may burden Estonia’s social system and adversely affect the growth prospects for its economy, particularly in the rural areas. At the same time, prospects may improve for developing the so-called silver economy, on which smaller urban communities may also contribute.

Apart from an ageing population and a moderate decrease in the size of the population, slow urbanisation is likely to continue as well. The absolute numbers of the urban population are not increasing significantly; however, its proportion is being boosted by the decrease in the rural population. Urbanisation is favouring Estonia’s larger cities and towns. The attraction of the cities of Tallinn and Tartu – and to a lesser extent also Pärnu and the Ida-Viru conurbation – is ensured by institutions of higher learning and growth in jobs related to the knowledge-based economy. The impact of EU policy and environmentally conscious values help to improve the environmental and transport conditions in the larger cities and towns, making them more attractive as places to live. With the construction of new urban regions around Tallinn, Tartu and Pärnu, urbanisation is covertly moving also into the countryside, as these so-called villages are suburbs by nature. On the other hand, urbanisation manifests itself also in increased work-related commuting by rural residents, as a result of which the urban lifestyle is spilling into the countryside.

The industrial low- and medium-high-tech

© Kiviõli, Kohila-Järve, Jõhvi, Sillamäe and Narva.
industrial bases of most county centres and other towns are exposed to the strong global competitive pressure, originating primarily in Asia. This may create difficulties for entire counties, for their centres provide most of the jobs in the counties. Mostly likely, their role as service centres will not change if the quality and multiplicity of services can be maintained.

The common agricultural policy of the EU and growth in green economy but also a rise predicted in food prices will help to preserve rural settlement. This may shore up the economic base of rural life to an extent but will not create too many new jobs. Furthermore, the following may be presumed: return of fallow lands to active use, intensified use of land, improved overall appearance of scenery, increased income of rural residents, but also potentially increased agricultural pollution. The exodus of the young from rural areas continues, whereas the elderly are returning from the cities and towns. So-called environmental people are settling in the countryside more and more. The adoption of renewable-energy small-scale technology is improving facilities for living in villages on the periphery and on small islands.

In light of the European transport policy, it continues to be important to improve Estonia’s linkage to the core regions of the EU, including the construction of a high-speed railway (Rail Baltic) connecting the Baltic States and Finland with Central Europe. Servicing the new trade flows of Asia and Europe presupposes a technical base: port terminals and logistics centres. Current trends are making Estonia search for greener solutions, also reduce the share of automobile traffic and increase that of public transport.

In the development of energy networks, the EU expects the construction of new external links for the electricity and gas markets to function. The environmental and energy policies of the EU are pressuring Estonia to allocate resources to the preferential development of renewable energy (primarily wind farms) both onshore and offshore.
2. Estonia 2030 vision

As a nation with a decreasing, ageing population, increasingly urbanised and in need of the reinforcement of its international economic competitiveness, we can contribute, via spatial planning, primarily to the improved functioning of the existing settlement system and infrastructure. A small nation can compensate for the smallness of its urban communities and the sparseness of its population by improving internal and external links. The proximity of the living environment to nature and its diversity, characteristic of Estonia, the plentiful supply of spare land suitable for living and a dense network of roads need to be made into strengths that are consciously developed. The main development objective is to ensure that any settled location in Estonia is liveable. Based on this, the vision for Estonia’s spatial development for 2030 is as follows:

Estonia is a nation with a cohesive spatial structure, a diverse living environment and good links to the external world. Low-density urbanised space integrates compact cities, suburbs and traditional villages, valuing all of these lifestyles equally. The human scale and economic competitiveness of low-density urbanised space are provided primarily by an environment that is close to nature and by a network of urban communities that are well linked.

The concept of low-density urbanised space is intended to encapsulate a model of future settlement comprising cities and towns and rural urban communities in which suburbanisation, extensive work-related commuting and the prevalence of an urban lifestyle also in the countryside have, to a large extent, done away with the differences between town and country across social and economic dimensions whilst preserving differences in the physical environments. Low-density urbanised space combines the availability of high-quality services provided in cities and towns and an urban, mobile lifestyle with the advantages of living in the countryside. This is supported by a networked social and spatial organisation.

Spatial diversity and the specific character of regions in the nation provide people with the freedom of choosing suitable places to live and work and a compatible lifestyle. Our smallness and low-density settlement, considered and green organisation of transport, and state-of-the-art innovative technological solutions provide us with a solid groundwork for preserving our specific character.
3.1. Shaping living and economic environments that are supported by the existing settlement structure and provide options

Estonia’s current settlement system attained its shape as a result of a long evolution, and for the society it is neither necessary nor feasible to overhaul the existing structure. This also has to ensure the best possible quality of life for people, the maximum exploitation of the regions’ development potential and the smooth functioning of the settlement network.

Estonia continues to strive for nationwide balance in the settlement system, above all through the network of county centres, as towns and rural urban communities are unable to provide enough sufficiently diverse jobs or services for their residents. The preservation of settlement in towns and rural areas will need to be supported by better linkage with county centres and other larger cities and towns.

In the periphery, including on small islands or in the areas of the national border, where the strategy of linkage with cities and towns is not appropriate, the main method to support the preservation of settlement is to agree and ensure a reasonable level of quality and minimum standards in public and private services. Preserving the habitability of the periphery is feasible for us, since only a small percentage of the population will be located there in the future as well.

In shaping the competitiveness of the nation and its regions, cities and towns, first and foremost, have an important role to play. Tallinn is the centre of Estonia’s economic life, the nation’s main gateway and tourist destination. Tallinn has to develop its urban functions and take on new tasks, preferably with an international weight, in order to evolve into an internationally attractive centre in the Baltic region. This is a necessary condition for the development of all Estonia.

Internationally, working with Helsinki is particularly important for Tallinn. The close economic, cultural and tourism links between the two cities are a good point of departure for shaping twin cities functioning in a more coordinated manner, which needs to be expressed also in the spatial planning of the cities. For the cooperation with the other partner cities important for Tallinn, St. Petersburg, Stockholm and Riga, mobility facilities in Tallinn and between the cities need to improve.
previously abandoned land. In the urban centres at least, the focus should be on the development of a public urban space that is high-quality, aesthetically and architecturally enjoyable and provided with a close network of service facilities. In the immediate vicinity of the cities, new construction areas should be located in either larger urban communities there, with their own social infrastructure, or areas where connecting to the technical infrastructure is simpler.

The planning of rural areas needs to consider new types of communities, since people living in the countryside are increasingly urbanised – in terms of their thinking, behaviour and employment. Rural areas cannot provide the same range of services or jobs as cities and towns; however, all of Estonia can be kept habitable. For this, all rural locations need to have a public network of roads fit to drive on year-round, the opportunity to connect at reasonable cost to an electricity network, a high-speed data-communications network, and the availability of drinking water. A person should be able to receive key services in her/his vicinity in an expedient manner and have access to the county centre by public transport every day.

particularly in terms of international competition, cooperation is important between those cities and towns and regions specialising in one sector (for instance, the cooperation of Viljandi, Kuressaare and Haapsalu in tourism) or supporting one another (for example, winter sports in Otepää and Haanja, cooperation of industrial cities and towns in Ida-Viru County and thelike). In the border regions of Europe, with low-density settlement and cities’ and towns’ hinterlands cut off by national borders, development has been promoted through cross-border cooperation. In Estonia, this policy may be implemented first and foremost in the case of Valga and Valka (Latvia).

The local living environment depends on the jobs and services provided locally and in the vicinity as well as on the local spatial organisation.

The planning of cities and towns and other larger settlements needs to preserve their compactness, make their internal structure denser and restore to active use any previously abandoned land. In the urban centres at least, the focus should be on the development of a public urban space that is high-quality, aesthetically and architecturally enjoyable and provided with a close network of service facilities. In the immediate vicinity of the cities, new construction areas should be located in either larger urban communities there, with their own social infrastructure, or areas where connecting to the technical infrastructure is simpler.

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3.2. Ensuring the availability of jobs, educational institutions and various services by means of linkage within and between daily activity spaces

A person’s basic needs, which impact on the shaping of settlement and space, are related to the availability of a place to live, a job, education, services and leisure facilities. Estonia’s low-density urbanised space breaks down into daily activity spaces, where the working-age population is constantly moving along the route of: residence – job – daily services. Whereas in 2000 approximately 120,000 engaged in commuting daily, in 2010 they numbered as many as 160,000.

The viability of Estonia’s territory beyond the immediate hinterlands of Tallinn and Tartu will be determined by the success of county centres and a city functioning as the economic driver of its hinterland. To be successful, it is no longer enough to provide services to one’s own hinterland; an important role is played by specialisation – the ability to find a place of one’s own in the international division of labour as well. Good examples include Otepää, Viljandi, Pärnu and Kuressaare. Tallinn has to develop its urban functions and take on new tasks, preferably with an international weight, in order to evolve into an internationally attractive centre in the Baltic region.
A settlement, on the basis of which Estonia’s low-density urbanised space of the future will be shaped. These areas need to be considered in the preparation of county and comprehensive plans, the planning of the public transport system and the promotion of the cooperation of local governments.

Studies suggest that the daily work-related mobility of Estonia’s residents has increased over the past twenty years. In 2011, 71% of people going to work predominantly spend up to 30 minutes travelling to work. The radius of daily activity spaces defined this way is currently estimated at approximately 30 kilometres on average. Most likely, the rate of increase in the number of commuters will decelerate, whilst the process itself will continue. Presumably, the radius of daily activity spaces can be increased over the coming 20 years from 30 to 40 kilometres thanks to better roads and higher-quality public transport, which will still allow people to reach their job within half an hour (mean travelling speed of 80 kilometres per hour).

The pull of large cities and towns (more than 40 000 residents) is bigger, and here a daily activity space with a radius of 50 kilometres should be allowed for.

In the future, the centre of a daily activity space will be no longer the town or city itself but its urban area encompassing both the centre and any satellite urban communities and vicinity, where 50% of the workforce travel daily. In 2030, such urban areas in Estonia might number 15: Haapsalu, Ida-Viru conurbation, Jõgeva, Kuressaare, Pärnõ, Põlva, Pärnu, Rakvere, Tallinn, Tartu-Elva, Valga, Viljandi and Võru.

With linkage within daily activity spaces, people will have more options in terms of places to work and live, whereas companies will have available to them a bigger and more diverse workforce. Larger daily activity spaces help to reduce regions that are at risk of peripherality or that are peripheral. Due to the decreasing population, the promotion of development and transport organisation need to be centred on daily activity spaces, which will help to increase the efficiency of the activities of working-age people.

Next to the internal cohesiveness of daily activity spaces, their reciprocal linkage and their functioning in conjunction must not be neglected either. This is needed for promoting comprehensive cooperation relationships and creating the economic, cultural and social synergies linked to it. The reciprocal linkage of daily activity spaces is primarily based on a network of public transport at a good level.

Rural areas cannot provide the same range of services or jobs as cities and towns; however, all of Estonia can be kept habitable.
I. Availability of services, educational institutions and jobs is provided by linkage within and between daily activity spaces by means of sustainable transport modes

In terms of linkage within daily activity spaces, regional and intra-urban public transport, including bus transport in the majority of the nation, has a key role. Public transport needs to provide mobility for those user groups who are unable to use cars or who, as service improves, are actually willing to travel by public transport rather than by car. The network of bus services needs to be structured so that it provides frequent, fast and reliable connections between places of living and working, educational institutions and service agencies within an daily activity space, whilst being linked with other transport modes (such as suburban railway, tram and trolley). Mostly, the better functioning of bus services can be ensured by means of organisational measures to help and shape the network of services, align service schedules, introduce new designs for structuring the network of services (for example, demand-based public transport) and make the ticketing system more state-of-the-art and more convenient (for instance, a single ticket nation-wide).

When it comes to linkage between cities’ inner and peri-urban areas, improvement in the situation of light traffic is important. Networks for light traffic that are used actively need to be usable year-round. Linkage of various transport modes requires the development on a sufficient scale of safe parking facilities for automobiles and bicycles near the more important public transport stops (train stations and larger bus stops). Inevitably, the automobile will remain the main transport mode for sparsely populated areas also in the future. At the same time, the quality of public transport also needs to be improved: by using the appropriate type of bus, adjusting the service schedule, applying alternative solutions (altering the route, schedule or...
vehicle of a bus service) in case of rapidly changing demand, preferring flexible (pre-bookable public transport) or other smart solutions instead of scheduled services.

A prerequisite for the good functioning of transport within a daily activity space, both private and public, it has to be ensured that the nation’s main connecting, secondary and local roads are properly fit to be driven on and safe year-round.

In the reciprocal linkage of daily activity spaces and providing mobility facilities between larger centres in mainland Estonia, passenger train services have an important role to play. Railway services at a technically good level allow travel speeds of 120 to 160 kilometres per hour, time-efficient travel (including to work on a daily basis) or long-distance travel. In addition to speed, convenience, safety of travel and green technology are important as well. Regional railway services need to operate on the Tallinn–Pärnu, Tallinn–Viljandi, Tallinn–Tartu–Valga/Koidula, Tallinn–Narva and Valga–Koidula routes. High-speed (limited stops) inter-urban services ought to be combined with slower routes serving smaller urban communities. The option of restoring the Tallinn–Haapsalu–Rohuküla line should be retained. In instances where inter-urban services cannot be provided with trains or where their services are insufficient, inter-

4.2. Fast, sufficiently frequent and convenient connections provided to the external world

Connections between Estonia and destinations further away will be provided primarily by air services. The international Lennart Meri Tallinn Airport is Estonia’s main air gateway. For that reason, all of Estonia’s residents need to be provided with the best possible access to the services of Tallinn Airport by means of public transport within Estonia. The utilisation of the airfield at Amari as a backup airfield for the international airport in Tallinn and for freight transport needs to be made possible.

The development of Tartu as an important centre for innovation and research also requires regular international connections. It likewise needs to be possible to operate international air connections out of the other major airfields (Pärnu, Kuressaare and Kärdla).

To provide good international connections to destinations nearby, fast, convenient and frequent passenger train services will need to be developed over the coming years. Studies have shown that a high-speed train has the clear potential to replace an airplane within a radius of travel time of up to 2.5 hours.

Shortly, thematic plans will need to select the location of a modern, high-speed north-south
railway route (Rail Baltic). A train travelling south along the most linear route possible at a top speed of 240 kilometres per hour would carry people with speed and comfort to Riga, Kaunas and Warsaw. From Warsaw, onward high-speed train connections to the so-called core regions of Europe are provided. Looking further to the future, the spatial facilities for the construction of the Helsinki–Tallinn railway tunnel needs to be preserved.

The speed, frequency and convenience of passenger train services need to grow on all the routes important for Estonia. The maximum permissible top speed of trains will need to be increased up to 160 kilometres per hour on the Tallinn–Narva–St Petersburg, Tallinn–Tartu–Pskov and Tartu–Valga–Riga routes.

International passenger ship services have clustered in the capital. Regular sailings operate from Tallinn to Helsinki, Marienhamn (Åland), Stockholm and St Petersburg. If desired, regular connections by passenger ship could be organised also out of the harbours of Paldiski, Sillamäe and Kunda. Similarly, depending on demand, (seasonal) sailings could be offered on the Pärnu–Kuressaare–Riga route. Planning is under way for routes between Kunda and Kotka (Finland) and between Tartu and Pskov.

One of the drivers of Estonia’s development is international freight transport. A location on the east coast of the Baltic Sea provides opportunities to channel both west-east and north-south trade flows, enabling it to participate in trade between Russia, Asia and Europe. The cargo ports (particularly Muuga) with their railway and road connections in the Tallinn area are an important transit and logistics hub. The high-potential harbours of Põltsamaa and Sillamäe need to be involved in this process.

The harbours of Põltsamaa, Roja and Parnawa could improve the competitiveness of the local economies and export or import goods important for those regions. Moreover, options could be considered for fully developing the freight transit potential of the port in Saaremaa. For the ports of Põltsamaa to develop and for risks of railway transport within Tallinn to decrease, it is well worth preserving the southbound by-pass railway route.

On all of Estonia’s coastline, a chain of small harbours (including marinas), optimal from the national point of view, needs to be developed in order to link islands to the mainland and further direct links to foreign nations for tourism.

4. Various transport modes are utilised in a balanced manner, considering the specific character of regions.

In urban areas, terminals linking various transport modes, allowing people to find the public means of transport they need readily and quickly, are turning into essential infrastructure components. A terminal at Ülemiste, planned for Tallinn, will provide a great opportunity to connect international and regional air services; international and national train services; inter-urban, regional and local bus services; and intra-urban services (trams and buses). Improvement is also required in planning transport solutions of various types in the area of Tallinn’s Old City Harbour, in order to connect international ship services with train services and local public transport and – via the latter – with the future terminal at Ülemiste.

Construction of terminals combining various transport modes needs to be considered also in Tartu, Põltsamaa and Ida-Viru County (trains, long-distance buses, local public-transport vehicles and connections to airports). The same policies need to be adhered to also at other transport hubs.
5.1. The development of electricity-production capacity needs to focus on supplying Estonia with energy. New energy-production units need to be positioned efficiently and sustainably. Estonia is not in a position to produce cheap electricity; furthermore, the production of electrical energy is an activity with a relatively low added value yet with a great environmental impact. Thus, the focus needs to be on the production of electrical energy first and foremost for Estonia itself. To ensure energy security, Estonia wishes to be able to produce all necessary electrical energy itself (but not necessarily all the time) also into the future. In addition to the spatially concentrated oil-shale energy, decentralised regional energy production needs to be developed more than in the past, with an important role played by renewable resources, particularly wind and biomass.

Estonia’s western coastal waters are suited for the construction of offshore wind farms. These need to be planned ensuring sufficient distance from small islands, preserving heritage and nature-conservation assets, and migration corridors and habitats for species. The construction of offshore wind farms needs to consider national-defence interests. Specifically, due to natural conditions and/or national-defence requirements, Estonia’s northern coastal waters, Lakes Peipsi and Võrtsjärv are not suited for the construction of wind farms.

On land, the construction of wind farms should target, first and foremost, former mining areas in Ida-Viru County, other areas remaining outside active human use and locations permitting wind energy to be utilised in integrated solutions. In Ida-Viru County, another air surveillance radar needs to be installed, which would mitigate the current constraints, due to national-defence requirements, on the location and height of wind turbines. On land, preference should be given predominantly to the construction of smaller and medium-size wind farms (up to 20 wind turbines), permitting energy production and its fluctuation over time to be distributed better.

Growth in opportunities to produce bioenergy will be furthered by exploiting biomass...
in heat and electricity production on a broader scale, creating favourable economic conditions for exploiting biofuel (including biogas) and increasing its utilisation in the transport sector.

It is very important to improve the facilities for storing energy. Estonia needs to be active in investigating storage methods and implementing the relevant technology. For the purposes of a broader utilisation of local resources and the development of micro-energy, priority is with the increased utilisation of smart grids and the creation of the appropriate infrastructure in households for consolidating left-over energy into a single grid.

At the moment, it is economically efficient and conceivable in terms of energy security to utilise turbine power plants running on natural gas primarily as emergency backup plants or for producing peak energy. As units producing basic energy, they will only be justified once a supplementary supply source is created – for instance, when a liquefied natural gas terminal is constructed in Estonia.

One of the future trends in energy might be the construction of a nuclear power plant on the north coast of Estonia. If it goes forward, the location of the nuclear power plant will be selected based on dedicated investigations, planning and an environmental impact assessment.

Currently, heat energy is being produced from local fuels (wood, peat and other biomass) or imported fossil fuels (gas, liquid fuels and coal). The share of heat energy produced from local fuels and waste (rubbish, wastewater and others) needs to increase. In areas with water-filled mine shafts, near bodies of water and in areas with shifting groundwater, it would make sense to consider utilising Earth-heat pumps for supplying the heat needs of urban regions.

5.2. Options for supplying Estonia with energy need to be expanded by creating external connections with energy networks in the Baltic Sea region

Good connections to the electricity networks in the neighbouring nations will provide good opportunities for the buying-in, transit and export of energy. This is important for Estonia in terms of the security of supply, energy security and in terms of also providing Estonia with energy at the most affordable prices.

The first cable connection to Finland (EstLink) has been created, and another

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1 A smart grid is an electrical network that consolidates the behaviour and activity patterns of all the users connected to it in order to ensure a sustainable, economically efficient and reliable electricity supply (Eurelectric).
is under construction. In the longer term, connections could be created to Sweden and a third Estonian-Finnish connection could be constructed, which would above all provide an opportunity to sell the output from offshore wind farms. In the next few years a new alternating-current high-voltage connection to Latvia will be added, and the more distant future may see a connection to Latvia via a submarine cable.

5.3 The need to avoid any unwanted impact on the climate, achieve a higher share for renewable energy in the energy supply, ensure the implementation of energy-efficient measures and decrease the environmental impact of energy production

Given the increasing stringency of environmental requirements and the attitudes spreading in society, minimising the utilisation of fossil fuels needs to become an important objective for energy supply within Estonia. To this end, the planning of new urban regions and the reconstruction of the existing ones need to plan for a more extensive utilisation of local energy sources. The sustainability of the society will be increased by energy-efficient solutions that reduce spending on energy and the environmental impact resulting from energy production. Increasing the energy efficiency of buildings will cut the heat-energy requirement by 30 to 60% and decrease demand for electrical energy by up to 20%. The potential for energy conservation needs to be exploited also in the manufacturing sector.

In the area of engine fuels, high energy savings are provided by cohesive and user-centric public transport. It is energy-efficient to better connect peri-urban areas by means of a network for light vehicles and to preserve and increase the density of the existing settlement instead of creating new settlement.

6 Cohesiveness of the green network and the preservation of valuable landscape features
The EU is developing a green infrastructure strategy, which aims to preserve or re-create a system of functioning green areas and facilities that are cohesive and sufficiently compact at various geographical levels, enable species to migrate and adapt to climate change, enrich the living environment of people, and support ecosystem services and benefits.

In Estonia, the green network has been defined by the thematic plan for the counties, “Environmental conditions guiding settlement and land use”, and by comprehensive plans elaborating it. Looking at Estonia on the whole and county by county, its structure, cohesiveness and share in terms of surface area may be considered good. Because of that, we need to focus on preserving rather than expanding it. The integrity and functioning of the large structures in the national green network has to continue to be ensured, or else it will
correspondingly be impossible to preserve the finer local structure. Because of that, the construction of large technical-infrastructure sites via large structures should be avoided in general. The extent of large core areas must not decrease very much (more than 10%). Where large sites needed for the functioning of the state are being planned for the core areas of the green network, cohesiveness within and between the core areas needs to be ensured. Mining mineral resources needs to ensure this by land restoration or identifying replacement areas. Particular attention needs to directed at regions where the density of large structures within the green network is lower and cohesiveness is at risk (for instance, in Central Estonia).

It is important for the green network to satisfactorily link the current protected areas, forming an uninterrupted system that contributes to the preservation and functioning of the conservation areas, the migration of species and so on. Listing the green network as protected is neither expedient nor needed in Estonia. This would impede the development of settlement in rural areas and conflict with the objective of the green network and the policies of integrated spatial planning.

### About the plan and its implementation

The Government of the Republic initiated the preparation of Estonia 2030+ with its order No 32 of 4 February 2010. The Estonia 2030+ plan is a strategic document that aims to achieve an expedient utilisation of space in Estonia on the whole, establishing the basis – determined by the specific character of its environment – for shaping settlement, mobility, national technical infrastructure and regional development.

The completion of the Estonia 2030+ plan was coordinated by the Planning Department of the Estonian Ministry of the Interior; however, its completion has drawn on contributions by many experts and officials in various fields, by county and local governments and by other interested parties involved and informed via the plan website and several public events.

The Estonia 2030+ national spatial plan has been enacted by order No 368 of the Government of the Republic of 30 August 2012.

The Estonia 2030+ national spatial plan will be implemented by means of adherence to
the objectives and policies set out in the plan both at the more detailed levels of spatial planning and in the national sectoral development planning.

In the upcoming years, county plans will be updated, considering the national spatial-development needs and the specific character of the regions. If needed, county plans will be prepared as thematic plans to address a given issue. Also, the preparation of comprehensive plans for rural municipalities or cities and towns will be based on the policies in the national spatial plan.

Everywhere, spatial planning needs to be guided by similar policies. Therefore, national guidelines will be developed, aiming to express public interest and improve the quality of space, adhering to the policies of energy efficiency and sustainable development.

Spatial development trends with an international dimension reflected in the national spatial plan will be taken to an international level in transnational planning, sectoral or regional cooperation.

The transport, energy, environmental, fisheries and agricultural policies will play a very big role in the success of the implementation of this plan. However, the link is particularly close to the regional policy, which is shaped in accordance with the spatial bases for the management of regional development in the nation and in accordance with the general objectives.

In accordance with the Planning Act, an action plan for the implementation of the plan has been prepared as an annex to the national spatial plan. Under the Planning Act, the Minister for Regional Affairs provides an overview of the implementation of the national spatial plan to the Government of the Republic within six months of the elections to the Riigikogu.

Progress concerning the action plan for the implementation of the plan is discussed at a session of the Government of the Republic at least once every two years, at the proposal of the Minister for Regional Affairs.

The full text of the national spatial plan is available at www.siseministeerium.ee.