

Freedom on the Net 2025 - Estonia



Key Developments, June 1, 2024 – May 31, 2025

Internet freedom remained generally robust in Estonia, a consolidated democracy and European Union (EU) member state. Protections for user rights and media freedom were strong, and the government placed few limits on online content, aside from media outlets affiliated with the Russian state that had been blocked across the EU.

- In July 2024, the Consumer Protection and Technical Regulatory Authority (TTJA) and the Competition Authority said they did not have the mandate to intervene after telecommunications companies raised their prices. The regulators cited the need to defer to market forces in the absence of a clear violation (A2 and A4).¹
- In June 2024, the Information Society Services Act, which transposed the EU’s Digital Services Act into national law, came into effect. In July 2024, the TTJA assumed the role of Digital Services Coordinator under the act (A5 and B3).²
- In August 2024, prosecutors charged Svetlana Burceva, a journalist who had worked for Russian state-owned media outlets both before and after the EU imposed sanctions on them, with high treason; she had been detained since February 2024 and was initially charged with violating the sanctions, but prosecutors said she had also worked separately with a Russian agent to produce propaganda. In June 2025, after the coverage period, Burceva was found guilty of both charges and sentenced to six years in prison (C3).³
- In January 2025, the Council of the European Union imposed sanctions on three officers of Russia’s military intelligence agency who had allegedly participated in 2020 cyberattacks against Estonia that compromised sensitive personal data and documents from several Estonian government ministries (C8).⁴

Political Overview

Estonia’s democratic institutions are generally strong, and political rights and civil liberties are widely respected. However, about 5 percent of the population remains stateless and cannot participate in national elections. Ongoing concerns include corruption, which is not pervasive but persists in certain sectors, and discrimination against ethnic Russians, Roma, and other groups. Far-right and Eurosceptic forces have become increasingly vocal in Estonian politics in recent years.

This report has been abridged for Freedom on the Net 2025 due to [ongoing budget constraints](#). Please consider making a [donation](#) to support future editions of this vital resource.

For additional background information, see last year's [full report](#).

A Obstacles to Access

A1 0-6 pts

Do infrastructural limitations restrict access to the internet or the speed and quality of internet connections?	6 / 6
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A2 0-3 pts

Is access to the internet prohibitively expensive or beyond the reach of certain segments of the population for geographical, social, or other reasons?	3 / 3
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A3 0-6 pts

Does the government exercise technical or legal control over internet infrastructure for the purposes of restricting connectivity?	6 / 6
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A4 0-6 pts

Are there legal, regulatory, or economic obstacles that restrict the diversity of service providers?	6 / 6
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A5 0-4 pts

Do national regulatory bodies that oversee service providers and digital technology fail to operate in a free, fair, and independent manner?	4 / 4
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B Limits on Content

B1 0-6 pts

Does the state block or filter, or compel service providers to block or filter, internet content, particularly material that is protected by international human rights standards?	4 / 6
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B2 0-4 pts

Do state or nonstate actors employ legal, administrative, or other means to force publishers, content hosts, or digital platforms to delete content, particularly material that is protected by international human rights standards?	3 / 4
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B3 0-4 pts

Do restrictions on the internet and digital content lack transparency, proportionality to the stated aims, or an independent appeals process?	4 / 4
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B4 0-4 pts

Do online journalists, commentators, and ordinary users practice self-censorship?	4 / 4
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B5 0-4 pts

Are online sources of information controlled or manipulated by the government or other powerful actors to advance a particular political interest?	3 / 4
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B6 0-3 pts

Are there economic or regulatory constraints that negatively affect users' ability to publish content online?	3 / 3
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B7 0-4 pts

Does the online information landscape lack diversity and reliability?	4 / 4
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B8 0-6 pts

Do conditions impede users' ability to mobilize, form communities, and campaign, particularly on political and social issues?	6 / 6
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C Violations of User Rights

C1 0-6 pts

Do the constitution or other laws fail to protect rights such as freedom of expression, access to information, and press freedom, including on the internet, and are they enforced by a judiciary that lacks independence?	6 / 6
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C2 0-4 pts

Are there laws that assign criminal penalties or civil liability for online activities, particularly those that are protected under international human rights standards?	3 / 4
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C3 0-6 pts

Are individuals penalized for online activities, particularly those that are protected under international human rights standards?	5 / 6
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Score Change: The score declined from 6 to 5 due to the prolonged pretrial detention of Svetlana Burceva, a journalist who had worked for Russian state media outlets and was sentenced, after the coverage period, to six years in prison on charges of treason and sanctions violations.[5](#)

C4 0-4 pts

Does the government place restrictions on anonymous communication or encryption?	4 / 4
C5 0-6 pts	
Does state surveillance of internet activities infringe on users' right to privacy?	5 / 6
C6 0-6 pts	
Does monitoring and collection of user data by service providers and other technology companies infringe on users' right to privacy?	4 / 6
C7 0-5 pts	
Are individuals subject to extralegal intimidation or physical violence by state authorities or any other actor in relation to their online activities?	5 / 5
C8 0-3 pts	
Are websites, governmental and private entities, service providers, or individual users subject to widespread hacking and other forms of cyberattack?	3 / 3

Footnotes

- 1 "Watchdog authorities say hands tied on telecom firms' price hikes," ERR, July 11, 2024, <https://news.err.ee/1609394059/watchdog-authorities-say-hands-tied-on-t...>
- 2 Riigikogu, Act on Amendments to the Information Society Services Act, the Copyright Act and the Taxation Act 390 SE, accessed August 2025, <https://www.riigikogu.ee/tegevus/eelnoud/eelnou/c49dabcd-bf38-410a-8eed...>; "Meta takistas kapot puudutava ERR-i artikli levitamist, riik eitab seotust [Meta prevented the distribution of an ERR article about the Kapo, the state denies involvement]," ERR, July 8, 2024, <https://www.err.ee/1609391524/meta-takistas-kapot-puudutava-err-i-artik...>
- 3 "Estonian journalist who worked for Russian state media given 6-year sentence for treason," Novaya Gazeta, June 11, 2025, <https://novayagazeta.eu/articles/2025/06/11/estonian-journalist-who-wor...>; "Estonian Journalist Who Worked With Russian Outlets Charged With High Treason," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, August 7, 2024, <https://www.rferl.org/a/svetlana-burceva-estonia-trial-treason-russia-p...>
- 4 European Council, "Cyber-attacks: three individuals added to EU sanctions list for malicious cyber activities against Estonia," January 27, 2025, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/01/27/cybe...>
- 5 "Estonian journalist who worked for Russian state media given 6-year sentence for treason," Novaya Gazeta, June 11, 2025, <https://novayagazeta.eu/articles/2025/06/11/estonian-journalist-who-wor...>; "Estonian Journalist Who Worked With Russian Outlets Charged With High Treason," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, August 7, 2024, <https://www.rferl.org/a/svetlana-burceva-estonia-trial-treason-russia-p...>