

INTERVENTION BY ESTONIA

National strategy on ESD was presented to Estonian Government already in 2006, whereas it was agreed that all the future steps taken in the fields of environment and education will be based on the strategy. Now the second version of the strategy is being compiled (in cooperation of the Estonian Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Education and Science), the planned actions are more connected to the new EU period and its resources. The renewed strategy will be ready and signed by two ministers by fall 2008.

More than ten years various environmental awareness projects are being supported by the Estonian Environmental Investment Center (www.kik.ee), as well as the two ministries. Projects are connected to the education (teacher training etc), environment, and varies from the practical actions in the field of EE and ESD to the newspapers till TV and radio shows.

An example of the biggest project in the field of ESD at the moment is “Let's do it” organized by the NGO called Estonian Fund for Nature : www.teeme2008.ee

The problem:

Estonia regained its independence in 1991, illegal dumping of garbage in our forests has been a problem. The issue is not just limited to the garbage itself, but also the mindset of people which leads them to treating our beautiful nature as their private dumpster. Though attitudes have changed somewhat during the last years, a significant number of people continue their habits. The amount of garbage littering our nature remains too great and spread out for our government to tackle alone.

We believe that through mobilizing volunteers into a massive action supported by a broad media campaign, it will be possible to transform Estonia! Through grass-roots action combined with public awareness that will shift peoples' mindset towards environmentally consciousness, Estonia will become and remain much cleaner country.

The action plan:

1. Geomapping about 7,000 tons of waste littered all over Estonia.

With the help of volunteers, we have already mapped more than 3000 illegal waste dumping sites. One of our core-team members, Ahti Heinla, has developed special software based on Google Earth. It allows us to place all the illegal dumping sites on a Google map. Each of the illegal dumping sites has an ID code on the map, relevant descriptive data and a photo. Such details make thorough logistics planning possible. The map is located on line at : www.teeme2008.ee/kaart . The mapping process will continue until the beginning of April 2008.

2. Searching for partners from the private, public and NGO sector to participate.

We already have an extensive circle of partners including one of the largest telecommunications companies in Estonia (EMT, Elion), and the biggest energy producer and provider (Eesti Energia). One of our strongest partners is Estonian Network of Nonprofit Organizations. Additionally, we have received 200 mobile-phones with GPS-systems for geomapping as inkind donations from Nokia. We have also received financial and non-

financial support from Ministry of the Environment of Estonia, the personal support of the President and several other important governmental organizations and institutions.

3. Building up a network of local leaders who help to plan and manage the clean-up day.

The co-operation of local leaders is necessary to make this clean-up action a success. Our goal is to engage 1-2 local leaders from each of the 227 local governments in Estonia. To date, we already have around half of them signed up to participate in our outrageous plan. We will recruit the rest through personal invitations to join the geomapping and planning strategical cleaning-up activities. They will then be responsible for organising the food and necessary materials for volunteers during the clean-up day. The local governments will also be responsible for organising the waste transportation of non-hazardous waste. Core-team members in co-operation with producers' responsibility organisations will be responsible for handling electronical wastes, tyres and hazardous wastes.

4. Building up a broad media campaign prior to the clean-up action to recruit volunteers and raise public awareness of the dumping and littering problem.

The media campaign will link the issue to the impacts that everyday life choices make on our environment. Our most important partners here are MTV-Estonia and Estonian Public Broadcasting service (includes television and radio channels).

Important dates:

15th of March – Beginning of the media campaign

21st of March – We start to register volunteers for the clean-up day

3rd of May – Big Clean-Up Day

4th of May – Thank-You concerts in three biggest cities – Tallinn, Tartu, Narva