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Design Policy Mapping in Europe

The following content is drawn from the “Design Policy Mapping in Europe” report. Access and download the complete report using the link:

https://madres.beda.org/en/publications/design-policy-mapping-in-europe/

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Sep 2025

Country Profile: Estonia

Country Size: 45,399 sq km
Citizens: 1,374,687 (2024) | Tendency: falling
GDP per Capita: 31,170.1 $ (2024) | Tendency: rising
EU Innovation Scoreboard: Strong Innovator (2025) | 118%
BEDA Member Organisations: Estonian Design Centre (EDC), Estonian Association of Designers (EAD)

Dedicated design policy status

No standalone governmental design policy currently, however design is *championed* within the *Culture Development Plan 2021–2030*, which contains a full chapter on design. In addition, the *Estonian Design Development Plan 2023*, prepared by the Estonian Design Centre, provides a sector-driven roadmap that complements the government strategy and strengthens design's position. These build on a consistent policy trajectory dating back to the early 2000s, including the Estonian Design Action Plan 2012–2013. Together, this continuity of government and sectoral initiatives effectively forms a coherent national framework for design.

Design in other policy agendas

- **CCI Strategy** – *Culture Development Plan 2021–2030* contains a full chapter dedicated to design with eight strategic goals, ranging from design's role in the digital/green transition to internationalisation and education. Actions include increasing design capacity in companies and public institutions, boosting export visibility, strengthening design education at all levels, and developing professional qualification systems. [Championed]
- **Industrial / Development Strategy** – *Estonia 2035* mentions inclusive, user-centred, and eco-design in mobility, health, and social services. [Integrated]
- **Circular Economy** – *White Paper* references "sustainable-by-design" and circular design principles. [Integrated]
- **Innovation, digital, architecture strategies** – No strategies or references to design were identified. [Overlooked]

Observations

Estonia represents one of the clearest examples of systemic design integration in Europe. The Culture Development Plan embeds design across policy domains, while

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the Estonian Design Centre's 2023 plan reinforces this with a sector-driven vision. This dual structure provides both governmental and practitioner commitment, ensuring design is recognised as a cultural, economic and innovation enabler. Complementary mentions in development and circular economy agendas broaden its scope.

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