

Cross-border family mediation - Estonia



Family mediation or the mediation of divorce disputes is primarily intended for parents going through a divorce or separation who require the assistance of an impartial specialist to mediate their differences of opinion and to facilitate communication and cooperation between them on issues concerning future arrangements regarding their children and to conclude agreements on such matters. The aim of mediation proceedings is not so much to achieve reconciliation as it is to reach workable settlements.

The service is made available and financed in the following ways:

1. by being directed to the service by the local government in which the child resides and with partial financing from that local government;
2. by initiating court proceedings and being directed to the service by a judge with the parties' own financing or, where possible, by applying for national legal aid;
3. at the initiative and with the own financing of an informed parent or by being directed to the service through the Estonian Association of Mediators (with the parties' own financing).

The price for a mediation process paid for by the parties themselves varies by region. A session costs EUR 60-80 in Tallinn and other larger cities in Estonia and EUR 40-50 elsewhere in the country. One session lasts 90 minutes and the parties can expect to attend an average of 5 to 6 meetings.

The family mediation service may be provided by specialists in psychology, the social sector (including child protection and social work) or law who have completed special training and hold a relevant professional certificate; the contacts of these specialists are available on the websites of the [Estonian Association of Mediators](#), county courts and local governments.

In Estonia, the organisation of the family mediation service is regulated by the following legislation:

- the [Conciliation Act](#);
- the [Social Welfare Act](#);
- the [Family Law Act](#) and
- the [Code of Civil Procedure](#)

There are also internationally qualified mediators working in Estonia who are competent to handle cross-border mediation cases in which one parent has taken a child to a country that is neither the child's native country nor its habitual country of residence. The working languages are Estonian, English, Russian and Finnish. The mediators can be reached at the association's [functional mailbox](#).

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