

TIMELINE OF KEY DATES IN ESTONIA'S HISTORY

Adapted from "Estonia celebrates Independence Day," Estonian World, February 24, 2019, and "Estonia profile – Timeline," BBC News, March 4, 2019

Beginning in the 13th century:

Estonia's early history is as a "battleground of foreign powers." It is conquered by Danes and Germans in 1227 and subsequently ruled by Sweden.

1710:

Sweden loses Estonia to Russia in the Great Northern War. German influence on institutions like Estonia's legal system, the Lutheran church, local government, and education continues.

1917:

The Russian Revolution gives Estonia the opportunity to seek independence. The Russian Provisional Government signs the Law on Estonian Autonomy, and Estonia's Provisional National Council declares itself the supreme authority in Estonia.

1918:

Russian forces retreat. Estonia issues the Estonian Declaration of Independence, proclaiming itself an independent and democratic republic.

Germany invades Estonia and does not recognize its independence until the end of World War I (November 1918), when Germany formally hands over authority to the Estonian Provisional Government.

Later that same month (November 1918), Russian forces attack Estonia, launching the Estonian War of Independence with Russia.

1920:

Russia signs a peace treaty with Estonia. Estonia's independence is recognized.

1940:

Soviet troops march into Estonia. Estonia is incorporated into the Soviet Union.

1941:

German troops invade Estonia.

1944:

Estonia is reannexed by the Soviet Union.

1991:

Communist rule collapses. The Soviet government recognizes the independence of the Baltic republics.

1992:

Lennart Meri becomes Estonia's first post-Soviet president.

1994:

Russian troops leave Estonia. Estonia joins Partnership for Peace, allowing limited military cooperation with NATO.

1997:

Estonia is invited to begin European Union membership negotiations.

2003:

In a referendum, Estonians vote overwhelmingly to join the EU.

2004:

Estonia is admitted to NATO and is one of 10 new states to join the EU.

2011:

Estonia adopts the Euro.

2014:

Russia and Estonia sign a treaty ending a long-standing border dispute, with the expectation that each country will ratify the treaty. But tensions with Russia continue.

2018:

Russia delays ratification of the border treaty, citing the lack of "a normal atmosphere free of confrontation...in bilateral relations" and "Russo-phobic rhetoric by Estonian leadership."¹

2019 (as of late November):

¹ <https://news.err.ee/833760/moscow-border-treaty-won-t-be-ratified-if-estonia-doesn-t-change-conduct>

Russia still has not ratified the border treaty, citing Estonian claims to territory now considered part of Russia.²

² <https://news.err.ee/1004458/russia-says-will-ratify-border-treaty-if-estonia-drops-territorial-claims>