



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Estonia's perspective in protecting critical underwater infrastructure through national legislation

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Background

Baltic Sea incidents 2023–2024

- Balticconnector pipeline and two cables damaged (Oct 2023) – *NewNew Polar Bear*
- Five cables damaged (December 2024) – *Eagle S*



Lessons learned and starting point for action

Keywords for lessons learned:

- Critical vulnerability revealed
- Risks: energy, communications, environment
- Need for legal clarity and stronger response

Keywords for starting point :

- UNCLOS as cornerstone
- Balance: freedom of navigation vs. national security and protection of infrastructure



First steps done

I phase

- Mapping national legislation and international rules
- Interagency meetings: who does what
- Clarifying division of competences

II phase

- First legal amendment (in force since April 2025)
 - Defence Forces tasks clarified
 - Standing duty: protect vital infrastructure



Draft law discussed in parliament

III phase

- Draft amendments to the Penal Code
 - Penal Code shall apply to an act committed in the Estonian EEZ or on its continental shelf that damages an energy or communication cable, pipeline, electricity generation facility, or traffic control facility connected with the territory of Estonia.
 - New criminal offences: damaging or destroying underwater energy or communication cable or pipeline used to ensure the continuity of a vital service connected to Estonian territory
 - Intentional or negligent acts punishable
 - Proposal concerning legal persons - punishment shall be a pecuniary penalty of up to four billion euros.





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Thank you!