Estonia is a small country located in Northeastern Europe with an area of around 45,000 km² and a population of 1.3 million. It is a member of the European Union and the NATO. The capital and biggest city, Tallinn, is a UNESCO heritage site due to its marvelous medieval Old Town, that invites tourists from all over the world. Estonian language is considered one of the most difficult languages in the world together with its neighbor language Finnish.

Estonia has a very interesting history, dating back to around 10,000 years ago, when the first people inhabited these areas. Throughout centuries we have been under foreign powers such as Denmark, Germany, Sweden and Russia. For more than 50 years we were under the Soviet occupation as well. All this has made our culture quite interesting and mixed. Our capital’s name means “Danish town” when translated, we have German food and architecture and most Estonians can also speak some Russian from time to time. The Republic of Estonia is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year with great festivities taking place all over the country and abroad.

Estonia is often mentioned using words such as “digital”, “electronic”, “e-state”, etc. We like to mention to every single foreigner that Skype was invented here (true story), that we are privileged to vote online at home during state elections, we have eHealth, eResidency, highest density of start-up companies and so on. Long story short, Estonia is quite an innovative, tech-savvy country where interestingly enough 52% of land is covered with forest.
Now a bit about dentistry in Estonia.

Both dentistry and medicine can be studied in our oldest university, namely the University of Tartu. The dental faculty was officially opened in 1938 and is now functioning as the Dental Institute of the university. One course consists of 32 students; at the moment we do not have an international course but definitely in the future, it will be also possible to study dentistry in English.

It takes 5 years of studies to become a dentist in Estonia with the studies divided between 2 years of mostly general medicine followed by 3 years of mainly dental subjects. Students can start working on patients from the third year and after graduation they can go to work in a clinic or open their own private office. There are also various postgraduate specializations a graduate can apply for: pedodontics, endodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, periodontology, prosthodontics, orthodontics. The specializations are highly competitive to get accepted to, as only a few spots are open every 2-3 years.

The Estonian Dental Association was founded in 1921. It unites dentists in Estonia- organizes various courses, stands for dentists’ rights and helps them in various professional matters. It is not compulsory for dentists to be members of the EDA but rather warmly recommended as it also grants them malpractice insurance.

The Estonian Dental Students’ Association was founded after Estonia became independent again in 1991. The EstDSA unites all dental students, stands for their rights, organizes courses and social events. Each spring we have a big dental conference for students and dentists, last year it was also international for the first time with lecturers and participants coming from all over Europe. The association joined IADS in 2015 and EDSA in 2016. We actively participate each year in organizing local and national campaigns for World Oral Health Day, we have also joined other prevention-related campaigns such as the Mouth Action Month in November. On a national level, the association works hard on prophylaxis, going regularly to kindergartens and schools to teach children about oral health.

Estonia is a small yet very diverse country. Dentistry in general is at a very good level, most of our clinics are equipped with the newest technology and knowledge. The EstDSA is very happy to be a part of the IADS and plans to organize more events for our international colleagues to come and witness this beautiful country named Estonia.

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