

estonian world |

The Cato Institute: Estonia is one of the freest countries in the world

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According to the Human Freedom Index 2020, compiled by the Cato Institute, an American libertarian think tank, Estonia is one of the freest countries in the world, ranking the eighth freest among 162 countries.

Estonia is scoring very high in the Cato Institute's Human Freedom Index 2020 in every category. Its personal freedom score is 9.12 out of 10; its economic freedom score is 7.96 out of 10; and its human freedom score is 8.54 out of 10. All in all, Estonia has moved up four places compared with the previous index, compiled for the years 2017-2018.

Also, in Eastern Europe, Estonia is considered by far the freest country – the next one in the Eastern Europe geographical category is Lithuania that's ranked 21st; Latvia is ranked 22nd and the third country in the freedom scale in Eastern Europe is the Czech Republic with an overall rank of 24.

The countries considered freer than Estonia by Cato are New Zealand, Switzerland, Hong Kong (considering China's crackdown there on any and every display of dissent, it remains to be seen whether Hong Kong will retain this position), Denmark, Australia, Canada and Ireland. Estonia is ahead of Germany and Sweden that share the ninth place in the index, and it's ahead of the United Kingdom and the United States that share the 17th place. Estonia, according to Cato, is even ahead of its northern neighbour, Finland, that is ranked 11th.

The Human Freedom Index

Rank	Freedom Rank Change (2017–2018)	Country/Territory	Personal Freedom	Economic Freedom	Human Freedom	Freedom Score Change (2017–2018)
1	0	New Zealand	9.21	8.53	8.87	▲ 0.01
2	0	Switzerland	9.20	8.43	8.82	▲ 0.01
3	0	Hong Kong SAR, China	8.53	8.94	8.74	▼ 0.02
4	▲ 1	Denmark	9.35	8.10	8.73	▲ 0.05
5	▲ 1	Australia	9.12	8.23	8.68	▲ 0.02
6	▼ 2	Canada	9.10	8.17	8.64	▼ 0.05
7	0	Ireland	9.11	8.13	8.62	▼ 0.03
8	▲ 4	Estonia	9.12	7.96	8.54	▲ 0.04
9	▲ 1	Germany	9.19	7.85	8.52	▼ 0.01
9	▼ 1	Sweden	9.46	7.58	8.52	▼ 0.03
11	▲ 3	Finland	9.21	7.76	8.49	▲ 0.02
11	▲ 6	Japan	9.10	7.88	8.49	▲ 0.05
11	▲ 3	Luxembourg	9.22	7.75	8.49	▲ 0.02
14	▲ 2	Netherlands	9.14	7.82	8.48	▲ 0.03
15	▲ 2	Austria	9.09	7.80	8.45	▲ 0.01
15	▼ 4	Norway	9.29	7.60	8.45	▼ 0.06
17	▼ 5	United Kingdom	8.79	8.08	8.44	▼ 0.06
17	▼ 9	United States	8.66	8.22	8.44	▼ 0.11
19	▲ 2	Taiwan	8.90	7.94	8.42	▲ 0.04
20	▼ 1	Iceland	9.06	7.71	8.39	0.00

A broad measure of human freedom

At the bottom of the index – the least free countries in the world – we will find Syria, Sudan, Venezuela, Yemen and Iran.

According to the Cato Institute, the Human Freedom Index “presents a broad measure of human freedom, understood as the absence of coercive constraint”. The index uses distinct indicators of personal and economic freedom in the areas of the rule of law; the security and safety; movement; religion; association, assembly and civil society; expression and information; identity and relationships; the size of the government; the legal system and property rights; the access to sound money; the freedom to trade internationally; and the regulation of credit, labour and businesses.