

ILLUSTRATED MAPS (FOR CHILDREN) - GOOD START TO EDUCATE NEW GENERATION OF USERS!

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Abstract

During the 48 years of Soviet occupation all the maps were state secret and exclusively for military use in Estonia. Only some very general maps – scale 1:1 000 000 - were meant for civil use. This year we celebrate the 20th anniversary of free cartography in Estonia. During those 48 years the whole generation grew up with limited knowledge of maps and how to use those.

Regio Ltd was founded in 1990 and today we are the biggest mapping company in Estonia. Regio started with Estonian road maps, atlases and wall maps. Today Regio has four main fields of activities: mapping, geospatial data, geographical information systems (GIS) and mobile positioning.

We have been producing illustrated maps for the last 8 years. In 2001 the Estonian Integration Foundation ordered an illustrated wall map for schools from us. The aim of this map was to introduce Estonia to non-Estonians. But the map became so popular and we got so good feedback that we reprinted it twice.

In summer 2008 we produced the illustrated Estonian Atlas for Children (for ages 4-10 years). It became extremely popular from the very start and since that it has been a bestseller in our bookstores. It is based on our regular A4 format Estonian Road Atlas (scale 1:150 000). All the map pages are numbered and framed just like in the Estonian Road Atlas. At the same time the cartographic style has been cardinally changed – colors, special fonts, less names and symbols. All the illustrations are supplied with short explanations.

1. INTRODUCTION

2.

Estonia, officially the Republic of Estonia, is a country in Northern Europe, with a population of only 1.4 million. During World War II, Estonia was occupied and

annexed by the Soviet Union and Estonia regained its independence on the 20th of August 1991.

During the 48 years of Soviet occupation all the maps were state secret and exclusively for military use in Estonia. Only some very general maps – scale 1:1 000 000 - were meant for civil use. During those years the whole generation grew up with limited knowledge of maps and how to use those.

As Estonia became independent, the mapping became free too. First Estonian road map (scale 1:400 000) was made by Regio in 1989. It had hand-drawn and pretty simple cartography but it was real bestseller. In 1994 Regio started to work with Integraph software (MicroStation) and since this year all our data(base) are in digital format.

Regio Ltd grew quickly, because the demand of maps was big. We started with road maps and atlases, city plans; we made maps for the state (navigation charts and base map), different wall maps. In 2001 the Estonian Integration Foundation ordered an illustrated wall map for schools from us. The aim of this map was to introduce Estonia to non-Estonians. But the map became so popular and we got so good feedback that we reprinted it twice.

By now we have made lots of different illustrated maps and even a road atlas for children. In all those products good cartographic work has been combined with lots of very nice illustrations (in some cases by the Estonian leading cartoon artists).

New growing generation is very interested in maps and we are happy to contribute to the promotion of that interest.

3. ILLUSTRATED WALL MAPS OF ESTONIA

The first illustrated maps were ordered by the Estonian Integration Foundation and produced in 2001. The aim of those maps was to introduce Estonia to non-Estonians (ca 31% of the population). We produced one bigger map of Estonia and smaller wall maps of each county (15 maps).

This big project was quite complicated both technically and as for the content. We formed the team of editors from the best specialists of Estonia and roped in lots of photographers.

The editorial team has more than 20 members (zoologist, botanists, ornithologist, ichthyologist, historians, geographers, linguists, teachers etc) and they worked out categories for illustrations:

- NATURE (mammals, insects, butterflies, birds, trees, bushes, flowers, berries, mushrooms, stones)
- ACTIVITIES (sports, hiking, swimming)

- TRANSPORTATION (trains, cars, lorries, trucks, tractors, roadrollers, diggers, planes, ships, yachts)
- ARCHITECTURAL OBJECTS (parliament, manors, castles, bridges, towers)
- OTHER (national clothes, historical events)

In 2009 we produced a new version of this wall map and this time main stress was laid on Estonian nature. Due to special map frame the map scale is smaller and there are only the most important objects of Estonia on the map.

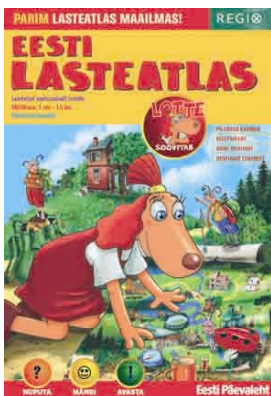


Regio's illustrated wall map of Estonia in 2001



Regio's illustrated wall map of Estonia in 2009

3. CHILDREN' ATLAS OF ESTONIA – PERFECT TOOL FOR FUTURE MAPUSERS!



Title: Eesti lasteatlas (Regio's Children's Atlas of Estonia)

ISBN 978-9949-423-56-9

Map scale: road maps 1:150 000, city plans 1:35 000

Issued: June 2008

Printed: PrintBest (Estonia, www.printbest.ee)

Selling numbers: due to unique concept 0,5% of the population bought it during the first 6 months.

This Atlas is not a picture book with some schematic maps but **real atlas plus an entertaining cartographic tool for training young educated map-users**. It is based on our regular A4 format Estonian Road Atlas (scale 1:150 000). All the map pages are numbered and framed just like in the Estonian Road Atlas. At the same time the cartographic style has been cardinally changed – colors, special fonts, less names and symbols. All the illustrations are supplied with short explanations and the selected objects are focused on Children's interests (play-grounds, sports and game parks, water-centers among those etc.). All illustrations are based on real photos and there are more than 2000 illustrations like that.

Regio's Children's Atlas of Estonia got the 1st prize at International Competition Tourmap 2009. (www.tourfilm.cz)

Atlas includes:

- Road maps (scale 1:150 000)
- City maps (1:35 000)
- General maps of Estonia and Europe
- Illustrating pictures where favourite cartoon characters give necessary information
- Most important facts of the country; flags of different countries
- Interesting and educating information
- Games, puzzles – everything that keeps a child actively calm during long drives
- Index of place names



Same map page in *Regio's Children's Atlas of Estonia* and *Regio's Estonian Road Atlas*.

Parallely to **Regio's Children's Atlas of Estonia** we produced also a webmap for children. Here the most interesting objects are represented by voice.

<http://www.lastekas.ee/?go=kaardipaik>



4. SUMMARY

Illustrated maps, atlas and children's webmap have significantly increased children's interest in maps and their homeland. These maps are also popular among adults and both tourists and tourism workers. Today most of our printed tourist maps are supplied with illustrations.

Feedback about our maps is very important for us. On Regio's website children can send us e-mails about their opinions and suggestions. Every autumn before GIS day we organize Estonian map drawing competition for children and the participation is getting more active every year.