

# **Modernisation of the data collection for social surveys and adaptation with pandemic crisis. Estonian experience**

**Workshop on Statistical Data Collection 2021, 27-30 September 2021**

Session 1: Managing and Modernizing Data Collection

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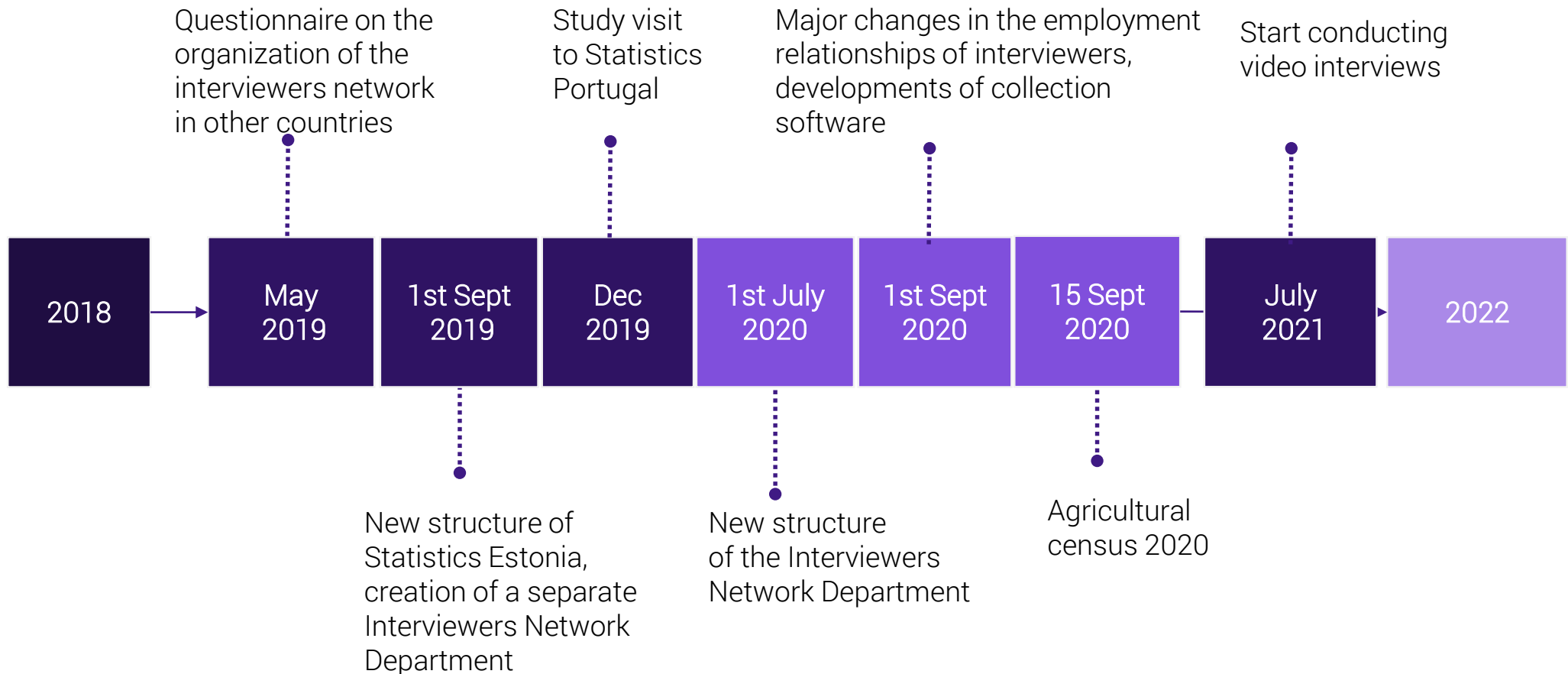
# Topics

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- Modernisation of interviewers network
- Adapting with COVID crisis
- Monitoring COVID risk levels and safety measures for face to face interviewing
- Communication with respondents

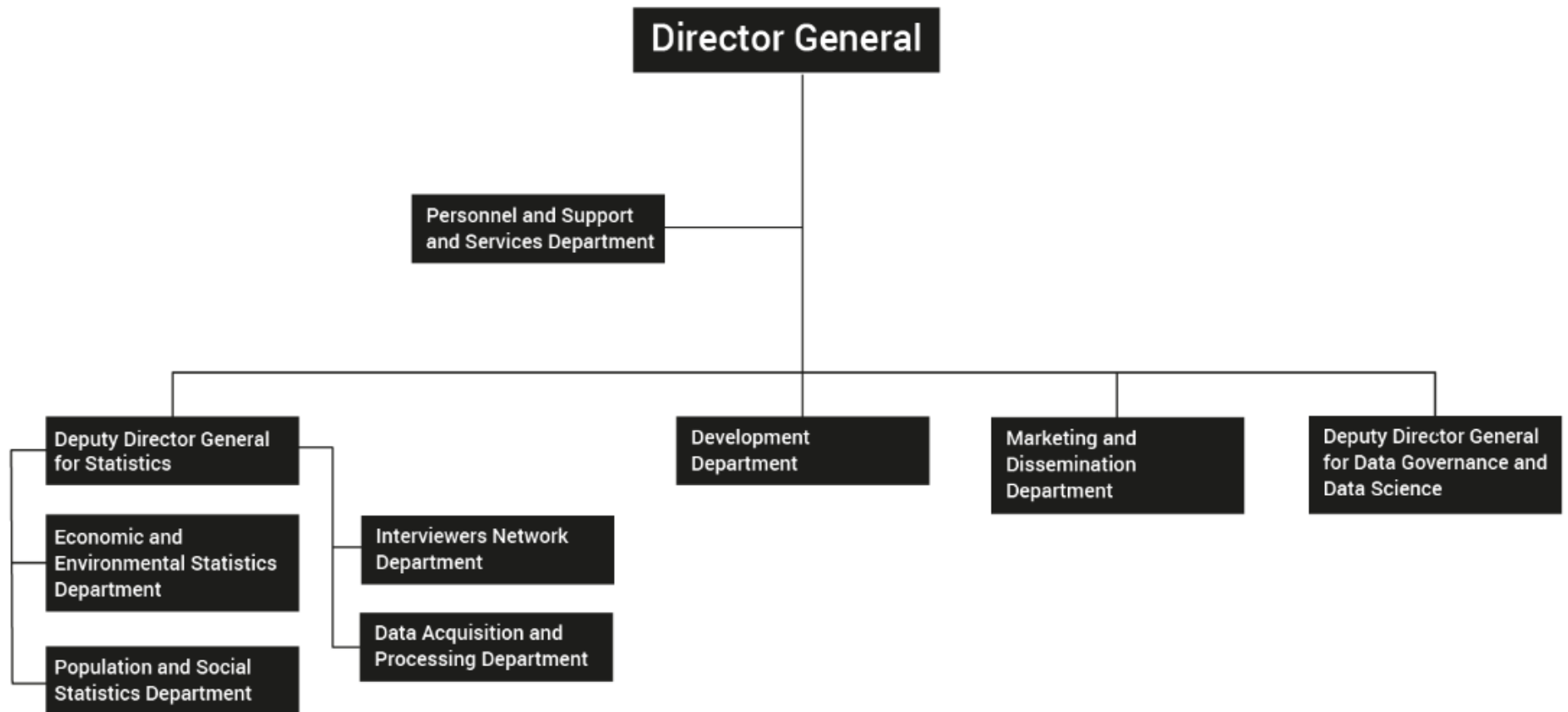
# Modernisation of interviewers network

Modernisation was planned in the 2018-2022 strategy of Statistics Estonia

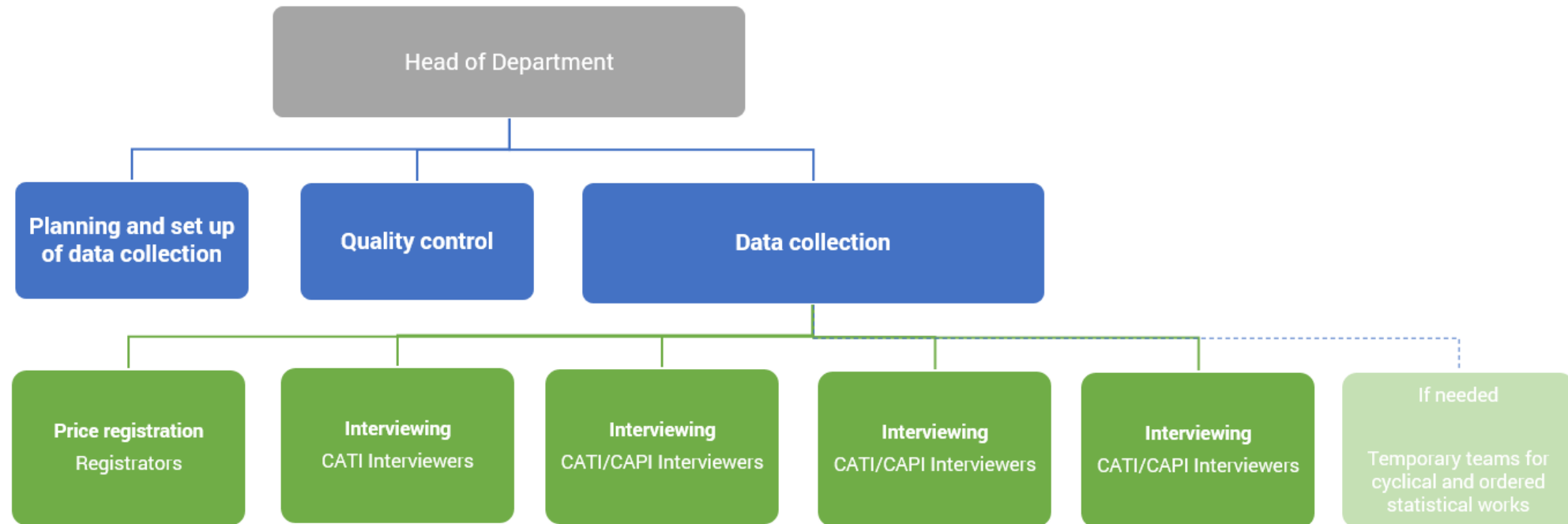


# Structure of Statistics Estonia

<https://www.stat.ee/en/statistics-estonia/about-us/structure>



# Structure of Interviewers Network Department from 01.07.2020



# What we achieved with modernisation

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- Professional interviewers network
  - Less interviewers with bigger workload
  - Higher flexibility - all interviewers conduct CATI interviews, some also CAPI interviews.
  - Better working conditions for interviewers - new employment contract, clearer pay system, higher piece work base salary and guaranteed salary, regular health control
  - Better working tools of interviewers - virtual telephone for CATI, keyboard and screen for homework, compensation for ergonomic working place (desk, chair, light)
  - Flexible data collection application - one interviewer can have both CATI and CAPI roles, within one region more than one supervisor can have a role and give a role to interviewers
- Lower survey costs
  - CAWI collection method is possible in almost all surveys
  - CAPI is reduced to minimum, CAPI -> CATI, CAWI or CAVI
  - Conducting video interviews (CAVI) instead of CAPI interviews
- Good quality of data
  - Higher response rate
  - Establishing and regular monitoring of quality requirements for survey data collection
- Other activities
  - Activities to improve the image of Statistics Estonia: informing about surveys and explaining the need for data, activities in social media
  - Improving the understandability and simplifying of questionnaires, cognitive testing of questionnaires
  - Developments of a new data collection application - CAWI data collection for population census takes place in a new data collection application

## Results of modernisation 3 main surveys (EU-SILC, LFS, TS) 2020 vs 2018

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No CAPI is done  
since 13.03.2020

5 times more  
CAWI answers

4% higher  
response rate

23% less  
interviewers  
(in FTE)

95% smaller  
transport costs

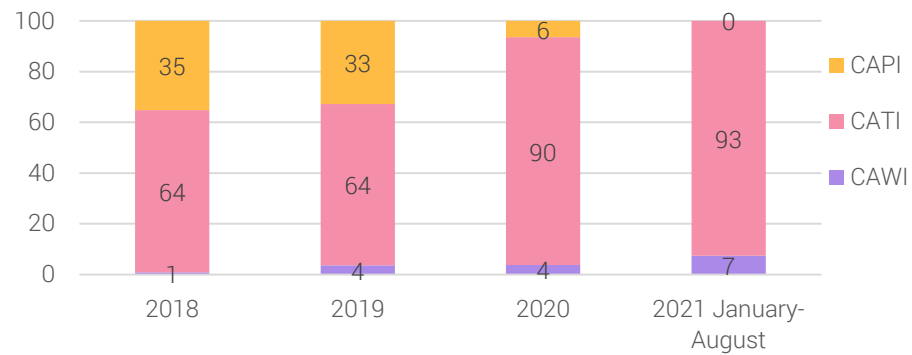
From 12.06.2021  
CAPI only in  
contract works

43% smaller cost  
of 1 sample unit

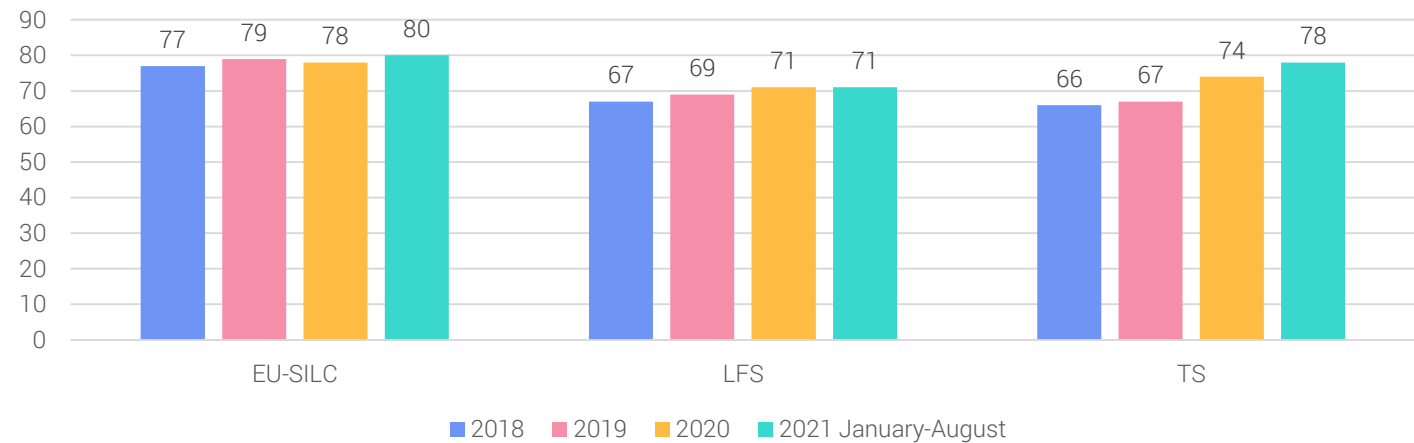
About 10% respondents  
prefer CAVI to CAPI

# Results of modernisation

## Response by collection method



## Response rate





# Adapting with COVID crisis

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- Lockdown was in Estonia from March,13 2020 to May, 18 2020.
- CAPI data collection was stopped on the same day. CAPI sample was moved to CATI method, if accepted. If not accepted, the CAPI data collection was postponed.
- Change of data collection method meant adapting with new situation for interviewers and learning of new skills.
- Our partners were very interested in continuing the surveys with CAPI data collection as soon as possible and to offer possibility of video interviewing (CAVI) instead or parallel with CAPI.
- Consequently
  - we developed a COVID risk level monitoring mechanism and safety measures for interviewers to be used for each risk level
  - we compiled instructions for conducting video interviews for interviewers and ordered the necessary tools.
- CAPI data collection was continued on June 12, 2021 in parallel with CAVI. CAVI is used for ESS and is planned in Gender Based Violence (GBV) survey.
- We avoid the CAPI or do only in exceptional cases if the CATI collection is also used in the survey.
- The pandemic crisis speeded up the modernization of interviewers network, as it contributed to the reduction of CAPI, the expansion of CATI and CAVI, and the development of video interviews.

# Monitoring the COVID risk levels and safety measures for face-to-face interviewing

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- Investigating measures other countries to reduce Covid infection during interviewing
- Description of safety measures for Covid risk levels and agreement of monitored indicators or websites with the Estonian Health Board
- Creating an information sharing page for interviewers, creating an electronic interviewer's health report
- Purchase of personal protective equipment for interviewers: masks, gloves, garbage bags, hand sanitizer, cleaning cloths, visor, nasal spray.
- Training of interviewers: Health Board training on safety measures and use of antigen tests, instructions on how to behave before, during and after the interview, when to make an antigen test. How and when to submit a health report.
- Increase in vaccination means changes in covid monitoring and safety measures on state levels.
- For us, this means constant monitoring and updating of the recommendations given to the interviewers to be in accordance with general recommendations. The challenge is also to find sources for monitoring risk levels at county level. Our main sources are: analysis made by the Health Board, website kriis.ee, analysis of UT, recommendations of the Research Council to the government, etc.

# Video interviewing (CAVI)

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- Statistics Estonia offers respondents opportunity of video interviewing (CAVI) instead of a face-to-face interviewing (CAPI) from June, 12 2021
- This was preceded by the development of a process and guidelines for interviewers, process testing, the purchase of resources and the training of interviewers.
- We conduct video interviews at the request of the respondent instead of the CAPI method. The CAVI method is not used as the only collection method but in parallel with the CAPI.
- Video interviews are conducted in Skype for Business. To conduct a video interview, the interviewer and the respondent must have good smart skills and a stable high-speed internet.
- Each video interviewer has a personal virtual space that the respondent can access as a guest with the permission of the interviewer via a link sent to him or her. This ensures that unauthorized persons cannot enter the room.
- We inform the respondents about the possibility of a video interview in a information letter and while contacting them by telephone.
- About 10% respondents of European Social Survey prefer CAVI to CAPI. CAVI is conducted by 6 interviewers.

# Communication with respondents and public

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- Press release about the suspension and resumption of face to face data collection  
<https://www.stat.ee/en/uudised/news-release-2020-032>  
<https://www.stat.ee/en/uudised/statistikaameti-kusitlejad-alustavad-taas-kodukulastusi>
- Leaflet on what we do to make personal interviews safe  
[https://www.stat.ee/sites/default/files/2021-06/Infovoldik\\_veebi\\_ENG\\_1.pdf](https://www.stat.ee/sites/default/files/2021-06/Infovoldik_veebi_ENG_1.pdf)
- We send leaflet to respondents with an information letter. We also inform if CAPI can be replaced with CAVI.
- Client helpdesk uses the leaflet information to answer respondents questions if needed
- In 2020, we started to use the Smaily application to send information letters and reminders by e-mail to respondents. This allows us better design and quicker delivery of the letters.
- We are constantly looking for the best messages and the best design elements for letters that ensure a higher response time.

# Thank you!

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**STATISTICS ESTONIA**

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