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Estonia: New Equipment for Children's Hospital and Forensic Institute

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On 26 January 2011, the Tallinn Children's Hospital received the new automated gait orthosis "Pediatric Lokomat". This apparatus, co-financed with the funds of the Swiss Enlargement Contribution, is meant to help children with neurological illnesses and injuries improve their ability to walk. On the same day, the new Estonian Forensic Science Institute in Tallinn, in which equipment financed by Switzerland has been installed for use, was officially inaugurated.

The new automated gait orthosis "Pediatric Lokomat".
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There was indeed reason for celebration on the Tervise (Health Street) that day in Tallinn. The fact is that exactly two years after a gait orthosis to improve the walking ability of adults had been installed in a hospital in Tallinn, a second such apparatus was commissioned in the Tallinn Children's Hospital. This therapeutic apparatus was especially developed for children whose mobility had been impaired due to neurological illnesses. The apparatus was produced by a Swiss company specialized in the development and manufacture of automated therapeutic equipment for the rehabilitation of neurologically-conditioned mobility impairment.

Both of these apparati were cofinanced with a contribution of some CHF 350,000 coming from the funds of the Swiss Enlargement Contribution. The remaining funds needed to develop the project came from the Association of Walking-disabled Estonians, the Tallinn Children's Hospital Support Fund, and donations collected during an Estonian fund-raising telethon. The procurement of the "Pediatric Lokomat", a mobility-therapy apparatus developed by the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (ETH), sprung from the initiative of two families from the Viljandi Region who

wanted to help their two mobility-impaired children named Elisabeth and Oliver, and hence launched the benevolence project called "Elisabeth". The apparatus has been installed and is ready for use.

Therapy machine for eight hundred children with walking disabilities

Speakers appearing at the festive commissioning celebration included the Estonian Minister for Social Affairs Hanno Pevkur, the wife of the Estonian President Evelin Ilves, representatives of the benevolent fund, and Christina Grieder, Head of the Swiss Contribution Office in Riga. The Directress of the Tallinn Children's Hospital, Mall-Anne Riikjärv, explained that the automated gait orthosis was at present the most effective way to assist children with impaired mobility, as this robot-controlled gait orthosis facilitated the automatization of walking processes on a treadmill and thus promoted neurological healing processes. According to the President of the Association of Walking-disabled Estonians, Ants Leemetsa, throughout Estonia today, there are nearly eight hundred children between 4 and 12 years of age who could benefit from this type of therapy. It is this group of Estonian children who are targeted to benefit from the apparatus.

Equipment for the new Estonian Forensic Science Institute

The date of 26 January also witnessed the inauguration of the Estonian Forensic Science Institute (EFSI), located right next to the Tallinn Children's Hospital, by the Estonian Minister of Justice Rein Lang. It is in this new, nine-storey building that all forensic and medico-legal investigations in Estonia will be conducted in the future. It is also outfitted with equipment that was financed within the scope of the Swiss-Estonian cooperation programme to the tune of CHF 3.5 million. More specifically, we are speaking about a computer tomograph for creating three-dimensional X-ray images, a magnetic-resonance imaging device to portray the tissue structures within the body by means of an image-producing procedure, an electron microscope, a portable scanner, as well as other laboratory instruments that are needed for forensic investigations. In addition, training courses on how to professionally use these apparati were also conducted within the scope of the Swiss Enlargement Contribution. The project was approved by the SDC in Bern, with the professional support of Professor Thali from the Institute of Forensic Medicine in Bern.

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