Summaries

EDITOR-IN-SHIEF'S COLUMN

The twelve stars shining

MART RAUDSAAR
Editor-in-shief of Riigikogu Toimetised

The overarching theme of this issue is the Presidency of Estonia in the Council of the European Union. Lithuania and Latvia have already had the opportunity to try this role. Their presidencies have been rather successful. So there will probably not be any prejudices towards Estonia as a former Soviet republic. We get the task of leading (and waiting is not a possibility in the current situation) the European Union, as it finds itself in a very difficult situation and faces many challenges.

The article by Paavo Palk in this issue gives an excellent overview of the role of the presidency. He also describes how the role has changed over time and how we could realize the full potential of this role. I think Estonian government officials will agree that, throughout history, the EU Presidency has taken the role of a secretary, charged with administering the whole system, and a negotiator who looks for compromises in controversial topics for the benefit of the European Union. It would be inappropriate to say or do otherwise on the high podium.

On the other hand, it does not mean that Estonia cannot have a positive impact on Europe. We cannot be patronizing and tell other Member States what to do. However, we can share our best practices and our experience in the IT field in the context of priorities of the Presidency. How to digitalise European corridors? Margus Mägi and Valdek Laur from the EU Secretariat of the Government Office discuss this question.

Even if we remain modest, the Presidency in the Council of the European Union will still definitely provide Estonia with many opportunities to win friends and influence important people. We can show them local sights. One of them is, undoubtedly, the historical Expressionist Session Hall of the Riigikogu. In this issue of *Riigikogu Toimetised*, the President of the Riigikogu Eiki Nestor discusses what the Riigikogu as the parliament can and should do during the presidency period.

CONVERSATION CIRCLE

The fruits of the Estonian parliamentary culture are ripening

RIIGIKOGU TOIMETISED PANEL DISCUSSION

The latest *Riigikogu Toimetised* panel discussion, where the representatives of the factions of the Riigikogu Andres Herkel (Estonian Free Party), Jürgen Ligi (Estonian Reform Party), Jaak Madison (Estonian Conservative People's Party), Marianne Mikko (Social Democratic Party), Mart Nutt (Pro Patria and Res Publica Union) and Toomas Vitsut (Estonian Centre Party) discussed parliamentary culture, took place on 19 April.

Mart Nutt: In parliamentarianism, Estonia has chosen the way of Central European political culture, and not the way of North European political culture. The government parties are using the "road roller" – the bills initiated by the opposition are usually defeated, even when they coincide with the initiatives of the government. The expert group at the Chancellery of the Riigikogu should be reinforced so that it could provide expertise to the members of the Riigikogu.

Jürgen Ligi: I believe many of the members of the Riigikogu would not know how to use a personal assistant. I am convinced that political parties must be sufficiently financed, so that they could train and prepare their members. Members of parliament also need experience – they need life experience, they need education and they also need the ability to cope by themselves. Secondly, during those six months the opposition should never misuse the moments the government is engaged in an international mission. But another thing is that the country must not stand still either.

Andres Herkel: In the 1990s, the parliament had a central role in Estonian politics. From then on, it has step by step turned into a rubber stamp, and the work and the work habits of the parliament have become marginalised. All that was important has been transferred to the government. Unfortunately the new parliament, where six parties are represented, has not managed to establish itself sufficiently in regard to the initiatives coming from the government, or taken initiative in shaping politics. First of all this depends on the MPs who belong to the coalition.

Marianne Mikko: We could be like the Nordic Countries also in political and parliamentary culture. When I landed in the Riigikogu after spending five years in the European Parliament, I could not understand how a member of the parliament in a parliamentary state can do high-quality work when they do not have a personal assistant. To whom is it useful? Let us put it directly: it is useful for the executive power that we do not manage things.

Jaak Madison: We all have different voters. All political parties have agreed upon common foreign policy and defence policy. As regards the quality of bills, it clearly makes no sense for the opposition to waste time or financial resources on in-depth analyses of bills if it is known beforehand that these bills will not be passed anyway. The main idea of it all is that you can show the public that you have defended the interests of your voters.

Toomas Vitsut: It is not possible to change the political culture by a command, it has to come from a need. Let me remind you of the 1930s, when it was said about our parliament that they were only fighting all the time. And it resulted in President Päts establishing the state of emergency; the silent era started. The other extreme end of the scale is what we can also see in old Europe – it is tried to reach a consensus in any case, things are discussed endlessly, the process of making decisions is ineffective. It seems to me that at the moment we are in an optimal state, that the decisions which are really necessary for the country are made by consensus.

FOCUS

Looking ahead in regard to the Presidency

EIKI NESTOR
President of the Riigikogu

Essentially the problems of the European Union are not different from the problems faced by each democratic state. There are people who enjoy the open world and also get material benefit from it. And there are people who have lost the foothold that used to seem secure, and ask – what will become of me? The European Union should help the second category of people

to cope better with their lives. But unfortunately they think that this union is the cause of all their problems.

However, people hold the supreme power in Europe. For many, it is not understandable why it is so that when you vote at the elections in Estonia and choose between, for example, Ossinovski and Ratas, the decisions will be made Juncker and Merkel, whom they have never had the possibility to support or be against. And if one still remembers the colonial times that existed years ago, and Farages who tell clear lies are at hand, then it is no wonder that a referendum results in Brexit. And only then do people start to think about what they have done.

Quite selfishly, I like Estonia's role of the Presidency if only because it will widen our knowledge of the European Union.

History of Presidency of European Union – Attention shifted from administration to politics[1]

PAAVO PALK
Historian

Organization of meetings and events in the Presidency country as well as laying out of the agenda and facilitating the agreements have always been the main tasks of the Presidency country of the EU. The increased number of Member-States and discussion topics has also increased the importance of the Presidency country in influencing politics throughout the EU's history. As the number of Member-States has increased, their interests have also become more diverse. And when the European Parliament received more rights to participate in the decision-making processes the Presidency country was forced to work more actively towards finding compromises in the EU legislation. From that point onwards it went beyond merely organizing meetings.

The growing political burden is also reflected in the increasing number of staff of the Presidency country in the permanent representation of the Member-State to the EU in Brussels. In 1975, Ireland increased the number of their staff from 15 to 24. In 2001, Sweden increased their staff from 91 to 151, and in 2009 – from 120 to 180. This year, Estonia will increase the number of staff in the Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU from 80 to 200.

The Presidency has also attracted more media and public attention to the Presidency country in the second half of the 1990es and in the beginning of the 2000s, when most Presidency countries would organize two sessions of the European Council.

The Member-States have stated in the Treaty of Lisbon that the responsibilities of the Presidency country in supervising the activities of the European Council and the foreign and security policy are to be handed over to other institutions, as the Treaty was based on the agreements reached during the Convent on the Future of Europe. Most of the members of the Convent wished to see a better integrated Europe, more akin to a single state.

It is interesting to note that this year more summits than ever within the last five years will be held outside Brussels. First, the unofficial European Council meeting on Malta, followed by the summit in Rome to celebrate the 60th anniversary of signing the Treaty of Rome. Apart from that, a meeting of the European Council focusing on the social issues is scheduled for Gothenburg in autumn. It is also possible that another EU summit will take place in Tallinn in autumn this year. This one will focus on digital matters.

It is only natural to ask if the influence of the Presidency is being used in the national interests. Most of the researchers

[1] Responsibility for the views set out in this article lies entirely with the author.

claim the exact opposite. In most cases the Presidency country is more modest in protecting their own interests and more centred on achieving a consensus between all Member-States, and then a consensus between the Council of the European Union, which represents all the Member-States, and the European Parliament.

Scientific articles often point out that small states have had more success with their Presidencies than large states, as they have been better at finding compromises. The Presidency also once again highlights the fact that small countries are, so to say, overrepresented in the EU from the point of view of size and population. They hold the Presidency as often as the large states, and have the same rights and responsibilities.

How to digitalise European corridors?

MARGUS MÄGI
EU Secretariat of the Government Office, Digital Policy Adviser
VALDEK LAUR
EU Secretariat of the Government Office, Digital Image Adviser

Before the coming Estonian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, we would like to shed light on the digital issues that will be spoken about during the next six months and the events that deserve attention, and discuss what kind of inheritance Estonia plans to leave to the following presidencies.

The main political keywords during the Presidency are free flow of data, e-government, e-trade, and smart economy. Cyber security and the issues related to the creation of the single digital market of the EU, like cooperation in consumer protection, or the problems connected with respect for private life and protection of personal data in electronic communication, will also be among important topics.

Nearly fifty of the 250 events and meetings planned for the Presidency period will deal with digital issues either directly or indirectly; digital issues will be discussed at several unofficial councils and high-level conferences. The main event on digital issues will be the conference planned to take place at the end of September. There are also several smaller, but still very exiting meetings where the specialists of a specific field meet in Tallinn and discuss the digital issues relating to their speciality in great detail.

Estonia is well known for its strong IT reputation. Therefore the guests of the Estonian Presidency events expect to experience something digital that may not exist in their home country. It is planned to have an exhibition introducing the technologies developed in Estonia, where we can demonstrate our e-state solutions and also innovative examples from the private sector, at Tallinn Creative Hub, the main venue for the Presidency events. During the first two months of the Presidency, driverless minibuses will move between Viru tram stop and Tallinn Creative Hub. As long as the tramline is being repaired, they will take our guests from the Centre to the venue of main events.

In cooperation with our Presidency partners Bulgaria and Austria, we have initiated a pilot project of digital presidency, which has two major aims. First, to reduce the circulation of paper documents related to the Presidency. Second, to promote the using of digital signatures in the work processes of the Council of the European Union and the Presidency.

The coming Presidency of the EU Council is certainly a great challenge for us, but also a unique possibility to show ourselves to the whole Europe from the best side, and to help find solutions in the issues where we can provide both experience and innovative approach.

POLITICS

The youth on the competence of the youth in elections

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The study argues that 16 and 17 year old adolescents have minimal skills and knowledge required for a competent electoral choice. This study is based on a 10-week e-course "Basics of an Active Citizen", which was conducted from 9 January until 20 March 2017. It involved 29 students from 24 secondary schools in Estonia taking tests on required course materials and answering two reflective questions weekly. The reflection questions were designed so that it was possible to offer different answers in a personal way without contradicting the information in weekly study materials.

Students gave reflective answers to 20 questions during the e-course. The present paper analyses the answers given to three questions related to electoral choice and the participation of youth (particularly 16 and 17 year olds who can participate in local elections for the first time in Estonia in October 2017).

When asked "Do the people who do not participate in elections lose their right to voice their opinion between the elections?", most of the students supported the idea that was the most strongly promoted in the study materials, namely that participation in elections and the right to free speech do not depend on each other neither essentially nor legally. However, students from upper grades (particularly the 12th grade) had differing opinions, arguing in favour of ideas that could not be considered the most popular or the most predictable. The ones who answered the questions positively argued that these two types of political participation depend on each other, which is why a wilful refusal of one of them also excludes a person from practicing the other. Those who adopted a compromise position most often argued that the people who do not participate in elections should not voice their disappointment in the results of the election.

The second question was: "What is the most important information to consider when making a competent electoral choice?" The majority of students argued that the most important thing is to be aware of your own world-view. However, they often added that one *should* know his or her world-view and often people (including the youth) are not particularly well aware of their ideological stance on certain political issues. Other things were mentioned less often: knowledge about the past performance of political parties, electoral promises (slogans, programs) of political parties, and being familiar with particular individual candidates.

Finally, when students gave reflective answers to the question "Is it justified to give the right to participate in local elections to 16 and 17 year olds?", slightly more than half of the students argued that the young people of this age have sufficient skills and knowledge for electoral participation, while about one in five argued that the age of participation has become too low. About one in five argued that this is not an 'either-or' issue, and that there are arguments both in support and against it.

Russia's new imperial patterns in relations with neighbouring states 2008–2016

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Based on the current experiences – on the examples of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova – it can be concluded that

Russia has got a systemic approach and long-term programme for drawing "near-abroad" countries into a dependency relationship and then politically realising this dependency relationship. To this is often added the advantage in terms of distance and history over other regional great powers in the realisation of its plans. Taking into account the rise of oil and gas prices in 2016, and Russia's strategic ambitions, it is fairly rational to expect an improvement and wider use of Russia's imperial pattern in 2017–2018, while for many target countries the situation is already complicated as it is and offers few ways for exit. Russia's ambitions in the development of dependent partnership and achievement of political control concern in particular Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Belarus, but they have implications also on the Baltic states in so far as these patterns can be applied also to us, should favourable conditions arise.

In the light of the above, there is reason to analyse, on the basis of Russia's new imperial behaviour pattern, where and with which methods Russia could create favourable conditions for the development of a next dependency partnership and the consequent achievement of political control, and to what extent that would concern Estonia.

What could be recommended to the victim countries and their allies in terms of solutions? Regardless of Russia's behaviour, the potential target countries of "new aggression" can prevent falling into economic dependence on Russia with systemic activity and international support which would deprive Russia of the possibility of creating political instability in neighbouring countries in a longer perspective. Generally it is possible to escape dependence on Russia at a time when the federal budget of Russia is in deficit and domestic interests are a priority. At the same time it is complicated for the "victim countries" to exit an already deepening dependency relationship as they lack the economic means and political capability to reverse the process. Thus a decisive impetus should come from outside, for example from the European Union. In other words, if the European Union seriously wishes to support the aspirations of the former Soviet Union republics towards independence and democracy, this must be done more systematically and with better funding: if changes are desired, it is necessary to be more "present" in these countries in terms of both greater representation and a more convincing package. At European level, a greater understanding would be needed that, the better the "prizes" offered by the EU, the more complicated it will become for Russia to influence the victim countries. For example, there must be simultaneously an internal readiness to make quick and principled decisions, a functioning framework and a visible "saving package" for the country who wishes to become free from the dependence on Russia, as well as the readiness to use it.

Little notes (1917–1920)

KĀRLIS SKALBE
(1879–1945)

Skalbe and his *Little Notes*

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Like Estonia, Latvia will soon be celebrating its centenary. The notes of Kārlis Skalbe, a Latvian writer and activist from the time when the Republic of Latvia was founded, continue to be relevant to this day.

Kārlis Skalbe was a Latvian writer, journalist, and teacher who helped to found the Republic of Latvia. He served as a member of the People's Council of Latvia (1917), and was elected to the Constitutional Assembly. He was also elected twice to the Latvian parliament.

Little Notes (an excerpt from a work Skalbe, K. Mazās piezīmes. Rīga: Zinātne, 1990). contain several topics that reach beyond specific historical events, and showcase the author's views in a generalised, condensed manner. These include the relations between the people and the intelligentsia; socialism and socialists in the context of Latvian national sovereignty; Bolshevism and its roots; Latvian character and identity, and its influence on political behaviour. The national identity is a recurring theme for Skalbe in his *Little Notes*. He writes: "There is one great goal in these times: the Latvian nation is striving for self-determination."

STUDIES

Sociological approach and core conflicts shaping competition between political parties in Estonia and elsewhere in Europe[1]

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This article discusses the impact of social cleavages on the party system and its formation in the Baltic States, including Estonia. Dealing with social cleavages is the main issue in the sociological approach to party systems. Roots of the approach reach into the classical works of political researchers M. S. Lipset and S. Rokkan (1967), who claimed that the party systems of Western Europe have been shaped by four main cleavages: centre-periphery, town-country, state-church and class cleavage. The last of them has been considered the most influential in shaping the existing party systems of Western Europe. In the Central and Eastern European context it is much more complicated to study the issues relating to cleavages, because Lipset's and Rokkan's classical approach cannot be transposed one to one, and the complicated history of the region has shaped a system of cleavages that is different from the Western one. So far the approaches have focused on larger Visegrad countries, paying little attention to the Baltic States. This article is based on the doctoral thesis on the author and analyses the general patterns of cleavages in the Baltic States, the impact of cleavages on the formation of party systems from the historical perspective (influence of the Soviet past), and the impact of interconnections with important social cleavages on the endurance or perishing of individual political parties. The results of the analysis show that the dominant cleavages in the Baltic States are related to identity and values: ethnic cleavage in Estonia and Latvia, historical cleavage (communist/anti-communist cleavage) in Lithuania. Class cleavage is not unimportant in the Baltic States, but it is shadowed by the cleavages relating to identity and the past. The patterns of cleavages in the Baltic States also explain the peculiarities of the party systems in these countries, showing among other things why the Social Democratic Party, which has communist roots, is still one of the main parties in Lithuania, and why in Estonia and Latvia the leftist niche is filled mainly by parties standing for the rights of the Russian minority. In the case of Estonia and Latvia, the weakness of leftist forces, the ideological imbalance of the party system (too much inclined to the right) and the perishing of communist successor-parties can be explained by the experience of those countries with the earlier communist regime. This regime and its inheritance may be called ethnic-colonial communism, and this

[1] The article is based on the author's doctoral thesis "The Sociological Approach in Party System Analysis: The Baltic States in the Central and Eastern European Context", which was defended at the Institute of Social Sciences of Tallinn University in 20 April 2017. The supervisor was Professor of Theory of State Leif Kalev and opponents were Rein Ruutsoo (Tallinn University) and Paul G. Lewis (London Open University) (Saarts 2017).

caused the emergence of the specific party system, where the ethnic cleavage has an unusually large role. In addition to that, the analysis also discussed how interconnections or not having connections with different social cleavages influenced the enduring/perishing of political parties, and it was found that when the elites of political parties make a conscious decision not to connect the political party with any of important cleavages, it may become fatal to the party in a longer perspective. This approach indicates the need to make the existing approaches to cleavages more context-sensitive and dynamic, and take more into consideration the strategic choices of political elites. Studying purely the strength of class cleavage is not of much use in the case of the Baltic States; the research perspectives should be richer in nuances, take the historical context more into account and be more innovative theoretically.

Drivers of productivity growth in European regions

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The objective of this analysis is to investigate research and development (R&D) and human capital as drivers of productivity growth in European regions. Productivity levels across countries and regions vary to a large degree and the discrepancies tend to persist over time. Moreover, differences in productivity account for a major part of per capita income disparities. Despite extensive economic and policy measures, substantial productivity gaps are still prevalent in the European Union (EU). The crucial challenge for researchers and policy-makers is to understand the causes of productivity gaps and to determine ways to escape low productivity.

The connection between productivity and R&D and human capital has theoretical footings in the ample endogenous growth literature. However, research activities and human capital are also central to the concept of absorptive capacity. Per this concept, R&D has two purposes. First, research creates new knowledge and innovation, and second, it develops absorptive capacity, or the ability to identify, assimilate and exploit outside knowledge. Thus, the technological progress of a region depends both on its own innovative capabilities as well as on its capacity to exploit external knowledge. R&D and human capital are important for both capabilities, raising both the ability to create own innovations and to imitate the creations of others.

In current literature, productivity is often operationalized as the multi-factor productivity measure termed "total factor productivity" (TFP) – as opposed to utilizing a single-factor productivity measure such as labour productivity. The empirical framework of this paper is based on a Schumpeterian endogenous growth model that explains the effects of absorptive capacity on TFP growth. In addition to the dual effects of human capital and R&D, the model involves the effects of conditional convergence. This analysis complements the model by adding a spatial dimension via regional spillovers, and by including the regions' pre-accession starting position, or the regions' productivity gap in 2003. The model is estimated by using a generalized method of moments, making it possible to account for endogenous feedback effects.

The econometric analysis is conducted on a panel of 99 European NUTS1 regions from 31 countries over the period 2000–2013. 28 of these countries are EU

members, and three countries (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland) belong to the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Additionally, two subsamples are defined. The advanced Europe subgroup includes EU-15 countries plus the three EFTA countries, and the emerging Europe subsample contains the 13 new member states that joined the EU in 2004 or in later accession waves.

The analysis results indicate that advances in human capital quality have an overall positive effect upon productivity in European regions. Interestingly, this effect is weaker in the emerging Europe: as the productivity gap in emerging economies widens, the positive effect of human capital quality on productivity decreases. This could imply that regions lagging far below the productivity frontier possess underdeveloped economic structures that cannot fully exploit increases in workforce qualification. Likewise, R&D expenditures have a significant positive impact on productivity in advanced Europe, but prove insignificant in the emerging regions. In contrast to advanced Europe, growth in EU-13 largely stems from spatial spillovers and regional convergence and is notably dependent on the pre-accession starting position.

Overall, these results imply that productivity drivers in advanced and emerging economies of Europe diverge to a great extent. During the post-accession period of 2004-2013, productivity growth in the new member states has strongly relied on spillover effects from their more affluent neighbours. The gap-driven potential for productivity growth is decreasing over time, however, and the regions in the new member states need to gradually shift their growth drivers towards internal sources like human capital quality and research activities, while at the same time supporting the development of efficient market structures and a growth-promoting regulatory structure.

The Estonian health policy vision needs new goals

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In 2008, the Government of the Republic adopted the National Health Plan 2009–2020 (NHP), which has become the key document on health policy, integrating independent strategies for different fields. In 2016, the performance of the NHP was reviewed.

The general goal of the National Health Plan is to increase life expectancy and the Healthy Life Years indicator. By 2016, life expectancy has increased (to 73.1 years for men and 81.9 years for women) but the growth rate has slowed down. If the trend continues, it is likely that the goal for the year 2020 (75 years for men and 84 years for women) will not be achieved. Contrary to expectations, the Healthy Life Years indicator has decreased and is below the 2020 goal by 6.4 years for men and 8.9 years for women.

The main causes of death are cardiovascular diseases and cancer, as well as injuries among the youngest age groups. Cardiovascular mortality has decreased in Estonia but the number of new cases has not. The number of new cases of cancer among younger people and cancer mortality have not decreased. General injury mortality has decreased but the majority of accidental deaths affect people under the age of 65. Affective and addictive disorders, diabetes and other chronic diseases are significantly limiting the ability to work. Moreover, a new and serious challenge has arisen in the form of muscle and bone diseases.

Diseases and deaths among younger people significantly slow down the increase of life expectancy and limit the ability to work. In order to increase life expectancy, it is important to decrease mortality among people under the age of 65. Special attention should be paid to cardiovascular diseases

and their risk factors (diet and physical activity), as well as to mental health policies with a view to reduce the harm caused by affective and addictive disorders, and reduce the number of suicides and deaths by poisoning. The third priority should be reducing the number of cases of cancer among younger people, and cancer mortality, since cancer diagnosis involves high costs for the patient and the healthcare system. It is important to also focus the health policies on muscle and bone diseases, which significantly affect the population's work ability and quality of life.

NHP continues to be the most important document on health policy. However, it has not fulfilled its primary role of a guiding instrument for the national health policy. In order to restore the rapid increase of health indicators, it is important to improve the strategic management of health policy, determine the priority areas and adopt the short-term results management system. Health issues must occupy a visible place in government action plans and a possible inclusion of the question of health in the list of strategically important government questions should be considered.

Protests and their political consequences in Sweden

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Sweden is well-known for its negotiations-focused political culture, but recent media coverage of the country often focuses on riots and disruptive protests. Does this mean that the country has changed? What are the political consequences of all these protests? This article uses data of the Swedish Protest Database and describes protest trends in Sweden during the last three decades. It also describes the consequences of one specific type of protest events – protests against school closures in Swedish municipalities.

The protest database is based on reports in several national and local newspapers during the period of 1980–2011, and therefore suffers several problems, like a bias towards more newsworthy and spectacular events. Nevertheless, the main conclusion of the analysis is that protest actions in Sweden are mainly smaller local actions, and the general number of such actions is decreasing. Looking at all the actions, participation in demonstrations is increasing, while strikes are losing their importance. The latter trend is also visible in the claims raised by activists – labour-related actions are in decline, and topics have become more diverse in general. While violent protests are still rare, especially in comparison to other European countries, the proportion of police involvement in protest actions has increased since the mid-1980s. Police presence often relates to events where left- and right-wing radical movements mobilize at the same time and place.

While a short article cannot discuss all possible consequences of protests mobilized in Sweden, it focuses briefly on protests against school closures. Such actions – from petitions to illegal school strikes (keeping children at home) – were mainly negatively perceived by all incumbent politicians, regardless their party membership. However, thanks to the disruptive (inconvenience) character of local events, the willingness of the politicians to be re-elected, and well-reasoned arguments put forward by the activists, a large proportion of actions still achieved their goals of keeping the school "alive".

Considering that similar kinds of anti-school closure protests, as well as other local and national-level protest campaigns are not rare in Estonia, the paper suggests that further systematic research on this topic would improve our understanding of individuals' non-electoral

political activism and its role in democratic processes also in Estonia.

Movements and protest in Estonia after regaining independency

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Two main layers can be clearly defined in the participation of citizens in the public politics of Estonia. In the 1990s, the citizens' initiatives in Estonia were structured by the post-colonial context that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union. The main source of motivation was the division of a significant part of the society into "winners" and "losers" as a result of the restoration of the nation state, and the property reform.

By the turn of the millennium, modern protest culture developed. The low ebb of citizens' initiative was passed. But the protests of the Estonians remained conservative. The movements of the decade were characterised by manifestations of post-modernism in civic culture. The increasing roles of left-liberal and liberal-democratic values enriched the ways of participating in public life. But Estonia still lagged remarkably behind Europe by the radicalism of protests and the extent of movements.

A criticism of the collection of public claims: An economic theory approach

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Involving the public sector in the performance of public sector functions is a widespread practice. For example, in Estonia, there have been attempts to make use of the efficiency of the private sector in the collection of outstanding public claims (taxes, fines, environmental charges, claims arising from court judgments, penalty payments and interests). Generally, arrears are collected in enforcement procedure by bailiffs who are freelance as of 2001 and finance their activities from the fees collected from debtors.

Research results have shown however that although the collection of public debts has been transferred to bailiffs who operate under private law, the collection of public debts is not effective today. Moreover, the system of remuneration of bailiffs where the amount of the basic fee is calculated as a proportion of the amount collected does not facilitate effective collection of public claims. The most problematic are claims with high collection costs the collection of which is indeed expedient from the point of view of the society, but not for bailiffs.

In view of the abovemetioned problem, it was studied what possibilities there were to increase the economic effectiveness of the collection of public claims. The research results showed that if the current system is continued, a raising of the fee rates could be considered. In particular, the fee system could shift more towards remuneration on the basis of workload. As another alternative, the possibility to finance the bailiffs' fees at the expense of public claims was studied. The strength of such an approach is a smaller burden for debtors, but a decrease in revenue for the state is a shortcoming.

Thirdly, the effectiveness of transfer of the collection function to the state was studied. It was analysed if the "Niskanen authority" who aims to maximise the budget would be more effective in the collection than bailiffs whose activities are motivated by profit. It appeared that if collection costs are financed at the expense of public claims, a system based

on bailiffs is clearly better in the pattern studied. If the current system is used, where additional fees are collected from debtors to finance the costs, then on the one hand, a state authority would be able to increase significantly the collection volume, but at the same time the resource would be used to collect also such claims as yield less social revenue than is the cost. In order to estimate which effect is larger, additional empirical analysis is needed.

In summary, the analysis showed that the collection system applied in Estonia may have significantly more effective alternatives. If the system based on bailiffs is continued, the remuneration system should be reviewed and a pattern more suitable for the society as a whole should be found, and a transfer to a system financed at the expense of claims would be worth considering. The criterion for deciding is above all the fact whether fiscal aspects or the effectiveness of the collection system is considered more important.

Role concept of academic worker from the perspective of stat, organisation and individual[1]

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The effectiveness and development of a university, but also an academic worker himself or herself depend on the interpretation of their role. The research conducted among the lecturers of the Estonian universities gave interesting results, on the basis of which the following recommendations can be given.

First, part-time employees perceive their role at the university rather narrowly, which may turn out to be a problem for the universities. Part-time work may be the wish of the employee, but may also caused by the limited resources of a university. One circle of problems is caused by the narrowness of specialities: there are no full-time positions that can be offered to top specialists of their fields, and a valuable resource, which could be implemented if the public sector was more decisive in ordering large-scale applied projects and research from the universities, is unused. Part-time working may also be caused by the fact that the employee has no qualifications for working on a higher and better-salaried position in the academic hierarchy. By concluding performance agreements with the universities, the ministry could review the requirements on the structure of the academic workers of the universities, and create support measures for the realisation of the idea of applied doctorate.

Second, due to the diversity of their role, it is hard for part-time employees to set priorities. The ambiguity of the role is supported by the project-based nature of the academic work today – financing of research is modest, and therefore it is necessary to create permanent financing mechanisms that would clearly allow to focus on one or another component of the role. In many specialties, the base funding of teaching activities is low and the minimum salary level in universities is lagging behind the salary level of general education schools. The state should conduct an integrated analysis of the career model of academic workers and their salaries, and work out methods for supporting sustainable development.

[1] The article is based on a study conducted at the University of Tartu: Vadi, M., Reino, A., Aidla, A. (2014). Student and Lecturer: Role Concept View. Data gathered with the support of Archimedes Foundation Primus Programme, financed by the European Social Fund.

Third, it turned out that studying is more and more seen as cooperation between a student and a lecturer, which means that the competence model of a lecturer involves diverse skills in addition to knowledge. Training of students and lecturers should be made a priority. and the state should consider how to include such evaluation criteria that focus on the process and not only quantitative output into performance agreements.

In addition to the above, the article also resents several other recommendations for reviewing the profession of university lecturer.

VARIA

Views of future can influence decisions today

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The article provides an overview of the main principles of foresight. These are: focus on actions, involvement of interested parties, a range of future scenarios, as well as disciplinary and methodologic variety. The authors stress that foresight differs from forecasts, as it is impossible to predict the future and the future is not predetermined, but can be shaped by the combined influence of today's actions and decisions. Consequently, the aim of foresight is not to propose a single outcome, but to create different future scenarios together with the decision-makers and experts. Taking those into account, the decision-makers can influence future developments.

The activities of the Foresight Centre, founded by the Riigikogu, are based on the above principles. The main mission of the Foresight Centre is to contribute to the strengthening of the legislative power in making strategic decisions. In the period of 2017–2018 the Foresight Centre will concentrate on three main spheres that were identified through consultations with experts and decision-makers. These are public (e-)governance, rules in work relations, and productivity.

The aim of the public (e-)governance study is to link the e-state development with public sector reforms. The study will try to establish if and how discretion and organization of state services can be brought closer to the citizens, as well as if and how participatory democracy can become more wide-spread through skilful use of technology.

The studies on the future of labour aim to connect the scenarios of population development, changes in work formats and work relations through time, as well as legal and tax effects of these. An additional goal is to collect and systematize experimental ideas developed in Estonia and worldwide on the possible fundamental changes in the regulation of the labour market.

Through the use of metaanalysis, productivity studies aim to establish a cleaner picture of the factors that affect productivity. Studies might focus on connections between productivity and quality of management, between research and development, or between export and international value chains.

The Foresight Centre intends to provide alternative scenarios for these three topics for the period till 2030. The Foresight Centre is to provide main points for decision-making. In order to carry out the studies, key policy shapers and experts from respective areas will be engaged. The studies will be carried out by the Foresight Centre with the help of an international experts' network. The Foresight Centre also provides a regular overview of the activities of think tanks around the world.

The importance and influence of science

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In the world that is changing at an increasing speed and due to ever more complex problems, the importance of science is growing. New and first-time tasks cannot be solved with old knowledge and methods. The question is, which arrives sooner: whether we find new solutions – or concerns about energy, water and food supply, climate change, migration and technological stratification accumulate. Thus the problem of understanding the importance of science is above all the question of perceiving that investing into science today reduces damages in the future. Investment into science is profitable for the society in the direct sense, and the social impact of science is increasingly less measured on the basis of "pure scientific result", that is, scientific articles and references. The social impact of science is increasingly manifested, for example, in its capacity to fulfil commissions from the public sector and enterprise. The latter is measurable in money and, for example, an analysis of the results of the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Development which ended recently concluded that every euro invested in research activities would generate at least 11 euro as a direct or indirect impact over the coming 25 years. The profitability of an average public sector investment into research and development by the United Kingdom is 20 per cent, according to the data of 2014.

What do we know of the databases of local governments

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When collecting data, the following principles must be kept in mind: an authority may collect data only for the performance of its functions and only to the extent minimally necessary; once data has been collected, it may not be asked in duplication; data must be protected, and they must be used securely. When an authority collects, systematises, processes and preserves data for the performance of a public function, this is maintenance of a database. The National Audit Office found that local governments collect data into hundreds of databases, the majority of which have not passed even the primary control and do not use the technical possibilities to exchange data securely. Databases must be registered in the Information System Authority (databases are registered in the *Administration System for the State Information System*, hereinafter "RIHA"). The aim of the registration with RIHA is to support the co-capability of databases and to monitor their compliance with the requirements.

Since local governments who need data to perform their functions ask a large share of the data from people, the National Audit Office wished to receive an overview of the databases of local governments and to be convinced that the primary control of these databases had been carried out. This article does not discuss the issues relating to the collection and preservation of data mode widely, but the focus is on the issues of databases.

Apart from a few exceptions, the law does not set out explicitly which databases local governments should definitely maintain. Only the document register, for which a database must be maintained, is mentioned as an obligation of local

government in the law. In addition, Acts mention a few more tasks where a local government must maintain a register or collect data. For example, the Waste Act obligates local government to establish the register of waste holders; the Infectious Animal Disease Control Act provides that local authorities will organise the maintenance of records concerning dogs and, where necessary, of other household pets; and under the Cemetery Act, administrators of cemeteries must collect the information in respect of the persons interred, the grave plots and the users of the grave plots.

In the course of the drafting the overview, it became clear that local governments had registered only 175 databases in RIHA by the end of 2016. This is less than the total number of local governments in Estonia (there are 213 local governments). Besides, nearly 100 local governments had not registered a single database.

Based on the references from RIHA and public sources, it can be concluded that local governments maintain at least 925 databases. This is not an exact or exhaustive number because, in the course of the drafting the overview, the National Audit Office did not review the maintenance of databases in the local governments. When comparing the databases registered in RIHA with the databases referred to in other sources, it appears that less than one-fifth (19%) of the local government databases may have been registered in RIHA. With the majority of the databases registered in RIHA, the aim of maintaining the database coincided with the task of the local government mentioned in Acts, which among other things included the task of establishing a database or register, or of keeping records (they are e.g. document register, register of waste holders, register of pet animals, cemeteries register). These databases accounted for more than three quarters (721) of all databases identified.

The databases that have been established on the initiative of local government, without the law providing for the establishment of the database, constitute more than one-fifth of the local government databases. 204 such databases and registers were found (e.g. parking arrangement database, register of plans, cutting permits database, allowances register, information system on public gatherings, immediate information system, information system on misdemeanour matters, kindergarten places register). When studying how many of these 204 databases had been registered in RIHA, it appeared that it was only a small number – 32 databases (i.e. 16% of the databases established on the initiative of local governments).

For secure exchange of public sector data, it is mandatory to use the data exchange layer for information systems (X-Road) which enables identification of the participants in data exchange and the accuracy of data. The data of RIHA reveal that only 54 databases of local governments use the possibility to exchange data through X-Road. The result is that local governments maintain several duplicating databases (e.g. local register of roads and land tax register, besides state databases). Such a situation could be avoided if local governments implemented more standard solutions (IT-companies have developed nearly 40 different software solutions that are offered as services to several authorities, e.g. various document management softwares, cemeteries register, local governments information system for excavation permits and permits for temporary closing of streets, etc.), which have the technical capability to exchange data through X-Road.

In summary, before beginning to collect data, a local government should always become aware if the collection of data is permitted and what the aim is. If it is necessary to establish a database for the

performance of a function, it must be inquired which obligations must be fulfilled to maintain the database. The state on its part should pay attention to involving local governments already well in advance when establishing new databases, in order that local governments would not need to maintain duplicating databases. Also, a balance should be found regarding the requirements for databases maintained on paper and those maintained with office software. It is also clear that the state authorities' supervision of the databases of local governments has not functioned.

The Sagrada Familia or a glass house: What is the future of international family law?

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The legislation must take into account the changing nature of the society. Family law is a great example of this. Today, the national family law of every Member State can no longer develop separately from the others. Different values can no longer justify the differences in Member States' family law. The society has changed and the common European values have become more important than the Member States' previous perceived values. Family law is being harmonised by developing cooperation between Member States, since cross-border family relations require harmonised norms. The rulings of the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights also give a certain stimulus for that. It has become clear on the European level that family law is moving gradually towards the core of the EU law. The national features of family law have been partially replaced by international principles. In particular, the European family law is seen as the family law of the Member State. Moreover, the European family law refers, in this context, to the values enshrined in the EU primary law rather than the norms adopted by a specific EU institution through relevant legal acts. The question of refugees has brought new focus to the questions of multiculturalism, human rights, values and religion, as well as to the relations between these. This has led to an understanding that the fragmentation between the values of individual states is a weakness. Moreover, the development of technology absolutely demands a change in the values. The legislation has to accommodate the types of social relations that will exist in the future. The confines of family law are changing. It is no longer merely a part of civil law, but tightly interwoven with different branches of law and institutions, including the public ones. International private law is no longer enough to determine the national policies. Relations based on family law should be treated differently than ordinary obligations. If international family law is seen as part of international law which is governed both by the general principles of international law as well as certain branch specific principles, any experienced legal practitioner will understand what it means for achieving a suitable applicable norm in practice. Different principles and norms will inevitably integrate. Therefore, the EU family law can be described as a glass house. The walls of the house reflect the faces of the Member States, but these can only be seen from a very short distance. From afar, it just looks like a solid glass wall. The reflection of a face is no longer important for the external observer. Only the Member State itself cherishes the reflection as a memory of something significant.