



Universität Potsdam

Forschungspapiere „Probleme der Öffentlichen  
Verwaltung in Mittel- und Osteuropa“

Heft 3 (2005)

---

Olaf Dahlmann

**Government Stability in Estonia:  
Wishful Thinking or Reality?**

Lehrstuhl für Politikwissenschaft, Verwaltung und Organisation



Forschungspapiere „Probleme der Öffentlichen  
Verwaltung in Mittel- und Osteuropa“

Heft 3 (2005)

---

Olaf Dahlmann

Government Stability in Estonia:  
Wishful Thinking or Reality?

An evaluation of Estonia's governments from the 1992 elections up to 2003  
(including a comment of the cabinet of Juhan Parts up to February 2005)

Lehrstuhl für Politikwissenschaft, Verwaltung und Organisation

### **Bibliografische Information Der Deutschen Bibliothek**

Die Deutsche Bibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.ddb.de> abrufbar.

### **Forschungspapiere „Probleme der Öffentlichen Verwaltung in Mittel- und Osteuropa“ Heft 3**

Herausgeber: Lehrstuhl für Politikwissenschaft, Verwaltung  
und Organisation  
Hochschuldozent Dr. Jochen Franzke  
Kontakt: PF 900 327, D-14439 Potsdam  
Tel.: +49 331 977 3414  
e-mail: [franzke@rz.uni-potsdam.de](mailto:franzke@rz.uni-potsdam.de)

Druck: Audiovisuelles Zentrum der Universität Potsdam

Vertrieb: Universitätsverlag Potsdam  
Postfach 60 15 53  
14415 Potsdam  
Fon +49 (0) 331 977 4517 / Fax 4625  
e-mail: [ubpub@rz.uni-potsdam.de](mailto:ubpub@rz.uni-potsdam.de)  
<http://info.ub.uni-potsdam.de/verlag.htm>

**ISSN** 1860-028X  
**ISBN** 3-937786-52-X

© Universitätsverlag Potsdam, 2005

Dieses Manuskript ist urheberrechtlich geschützt. Es darf ohne vorherige Genehmigung der Autoren / Herausgeber nicht vervielfältigt werden.

## Table of Contents

<b>1. Conceptual Basics of Government Stability .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Theory of Democracy and Government Stability .....	1
1.2 Government Stability as a Necessity of a Temporary Continuity of Governments.....	2
1.3 Relevance of Government and Government Stability.....	3
1.4 Measuring Government Stability and Criticism to a Concept of Government Stability .....	4
1.5 Measuring Change of Government .....	7
<b>2. Government Stability in Estonia: Wishful Thinking or Reality? .....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 The Estonian Context .....	8
2.2 Former Governments.....	9
2.3 Variables of the Stability of Governments .....	10
2.3.1 The Constitutional Framework.....	10
2.3.2 A Fragmented Party System with Little Polarization.....	11
2.3.3 The Parliament: Defining Features of the Riigikogu .....	12
2.3.4 High Fluctuation and the Professionalization of the Government .....	14
2.3.5 High Continuity of Personnel and Elite Agreement on Key Policy Issues.....	16
2.4 Review of Estonia's 9 <sup>th</sup> Government .....	16
2.5 Conclusion: Government Stability in spite of Frequent Government Changes .....	19
 Bibliography .....	 21
Appendix .....	23

## Table of Figures

Diagram 1: Influences on the Stability of Governments.....	7
 Table 1: Previous Governments of Estonia.....	 9
Table 2: Distribution of Members of Parliament according to their Experience in the Legislative Periods of 1992-2003 .....	13
Table 3: Proportion of Held Offices by Ministers (1992-2003).....	15
Table 4: Composition of the Estonian Government (as of February 2005).....	17

## Abstract

This article examines the multiple governments of independent Estonia since 1992 referring to their stability. Confronted with the immense problems of democratic transition, the multi-party governments of Estonia change comparatively often. Following the elections of March 2003 the ninth government since 1992 was formed. A detailed examination of government stability and the example of Estonia is accordingly warranted, given that the country is seen as the most successful Central Eastern European transition country in spite of its frequent changes of government.

Furthermore, this article questions whether or not internal government stability can exist within a situation where the government changes frequently. What does stability of government mean and what are the varying multi-faceted depths of the term? Before analysing the term, it has to be clarified and defined. It is presumed that government stability is composed of multiple variables influencing one another. Data about the average tenure of a government is not very conclusive. Rather, the deeper political causes for governmental change need to be examined.

Therefore, this article discusses the conceptual and theoretical basics of governmental stability first. Secondly, it discusses the Estonian situation in detail up to the elections of 2003, including a short review of the 9<sup>th</sup> government since independence. In the conclusion, the author explains whether or not the governments of Estonia are stable.

In the appendix, the reader finds all election results and also a list of all previous ministers of Estonian governments (all data are as of July 2002).

*This paper is an abridged version and outlines the findings of the thesis “Government Stability in Estonia” which the author handed in at the University of Potsdam in July 2002.*

# 1. Conceptual Basics of Government Stability

## 1.1 Theory of Democracy and Government Stability

First of all, the term “government stability” is itself controversial. Linz theorizes that in order to function effectively, governments must have a specific degree of stability. Subsequently, there must also be the possibility for a change within government. Linz states that, “Voters in democracy seem to share both a desire for continuity and stability and a readiness for weariness with too much of it and a yearning for change” (Linz 1998: 28). What does the ideal term of office look like and does it actually exist?

Harfst (2001) points out that for finding an answer to that question one has to refer to basic democratic principles and therefore the author returned to Dahl’s responsiveness as a democratic principle (Dahl 1971).<sup>1</sup> To guarantee responsiveness, a democratic system must be up to the following criteria: elections must be realised and the opposition must be able to accept the outcome of said elections. The opposition must have the possibility of an equitable competition and the ability to replace the current administration if the electoral outcome dictates a necessity for it (Harfst 2001: 1).

“The idea of electing someone for life to exercise effective power, or representatives for unlimited time (without ever having to stand again for election) does not fit into our thinking about democracy” (Linz 1998: 19).

The conclusion is that elections alone can affect a change in the executive branch, but they don’t necessarily need to overturn the power structure at any given time period. “The relation between efficacy, the capacity to solve problems, and legitimacy is modified largely by the time perspective of the citizens” (Linz 1998: 20).

It becomes apparent that governments are, concerning their term of office, basically restricted by regular elections. Elected individuals must subject themselves to the political competition of elections within a defined cycle. Competition is the required component of the democratic electoral process because “semi- or pseudo-democracies” also have elections, but these masquerading elections are not competitive (Linz 1998: 20).

In representative democracies the government is not elected directly by the public, but instead by

---

<sup>1</sup> Dahl (1971) explains significant his concept of responsiveness in chapter one (pp. 1-16).

parliament. That is why one ascribes importance to the parliament as an institution and the political parties as actors within the parliament. A regnant administration should finally have received permanent support of the whole governmental body and should remain in office for a whole legislative period. Thus, in the end of a legislative period, regular elections confirm an administration, vary an administration's composite shape or resign it from office.

## **1.2 Government Stability as a Necessity of a Temporary Continuity of Governments**

As aforementioned, governments are temporary limited by elections. Governments are principally able to stay in office for more than one legislative period. However, theory of democracy demands for the majority of a population to affirm an administration's legitimacy. In this manner, elections legitimate administrations to assume responsibility for a certain period of time. "Democracy is government pro tempore" as Linz mentions (Linz 1998: 19).

The period of office is established by the constitution and, consequently, an ideal reign would exist if government remains unmodified for the whole term in office. Administrative stability refers merely to the stability in this specified period, which is defined by the constitution. For the particular case of Estonia, the time limitation of a given administration would be four years (§ 60 Estonian Constitution). Thus, theory of democracy defines a temporary maximum for the term of administrative stability.

Following from the definition of a temporary maximum, the reader questions whether there is also an existing temporarily defined minimum of administrative duration? When are governments still stable and when are they unstable? According to the consolidated findings, all cabinets staying less than one whole legislative period in office must be classified on principle as unstable. Governments need time to implement their political projects and programs. This is also the reason to give new cabinets 100 days time after the assumption of office before judging their mistakes (see Linz 1998: 35).

But as for defining the minimum of a term, this proposal is lacking. This time frame does not point out that governments have to spend time, for example, implementing political and administrative structures, passing laws and providing budgets. Finally, governments should have the ability to observe the results of their policies and to take corrective actions in the case of doubt (see Harfst 2001: 1).



Linz argues that governments are acting in “cycles” which influence the “electoral-democratic process” (Linz 1998: 33). In addition to the economic, social and international cycles, the budget is particularly important. Linz annotates that, after assumption of office, cabinets mostly have to adopt the budget of the previous government. Thus, there is only little scope for realising their own policy programs: “A government may come into power to operate, at least, until the next budget making process within the constraints decided by its predecessor and it might leave its successor with the budget designed for continuing in power” (Linz 1998: 33).

As already mentioned, an administration should have the opportunity to evaluate their policies and, if necessary, to correct them. The best circumstances arise when an administration has the chance to pass its own budget bill.

It becomes apparent that defining a minimum of government duration is intractable. If procurable, a minimum period of two years is adequate.

### **1.3 Relevance of Government and Government Stability**

Confronted with the so-called “dilemma of simultaneity”<sup>2</sup> governments in the CEEC could be regarded as the crucial actors of transition. The government is responsible and puts forth the general guidelines of policy. In reference to the transition wave in CEE, it is characteristic that governments are subject to external interaction, which has not taken place in previous transitions.

“In other words, today’s neo-democracies have much less time to „catch up“ and many fewer degrees of freedom in dealing with their respective citizenries. [...] And, even if the demands of their own citizens could somehow be deferred, neo-democratic politicians would still be hit with deadlines imposed by such external “conditioners” as the International Monetary Fund, the European Union, or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe” (Schmitter and Santiso 1998: 74).

In this manner, governments in the CEE have to cope with the transition process inwardly and outwardly. Besides national embarrassments, CEE governments also must fulfil the requirements of international standards and that further complicates the process. Detailed discrepancies emanate from international organisations, which are outside of the realm of governmental authority. However, decisions have to be made and the electorate must legitimise these. Scores of cabinets failed and could not be affirmed in elections. Anyhow, parliament and government are

---

<sup>2</sup> The term “dilemma of simultaneity” derives from Claus Offe (1991).

authorised as democratic institutions, responsible for decision-making and implementation of the results of the decision-making process.

Consequently, governments are further on a decision-making board whose functioning and stability is fundamental for academic research.

#### **1.4 Measuring Government Stability and Criticism to a Concept of Government Stability**

Thus, it appears that in academic discourse, an integrative concept of government stability does not persistently exist. In addition, context and interpretation further cloud what little definition there is. What kind of benefit does the concept of “stability” conceal? How can we define stable and unstable governments? Is academic debate critical to a concept of government stability?

Laver and Shepsle propose to categorize a government as stable “if a government can survive dramatic changes in its political environment while still managing to hold on the reins of power” (Laver and Shepsle 1998: 28). “A government is instable, in contrast, if it cannot survive even small changes to the environment in which it originally took office” (ibid.). It is therefore mandated to examine the political context in which a cabinet took office, and the context in which it was forced to give up government power.

Even though democracies exhibit regular requests for changes of government, governments with a short tenure are evaluated negatively: “Short-lived cabinets are regarded as ineffective policy-makers” (Lijphart 1984: 165). Government instabilities or short tenures of cabinets are not only generally seen as negative, but they are also seen as indicators for larger systemic crises or a symptom of a potential breakdown of the political system (Linz 1978: 110 et sqq.). The main argument is that government instability “prevents the formulation and consistent implementation of public policies” (Linz 1998: 28).

In contradiction to this argument, one can state that rapidly changing governments could be able to solve mounting and successive problems qualitatively better and faster than could be done by a single stable coalition or a minority government without support (see Williams 1964: 426 et sqq.). Sartori concurs with this judgment by stating that governments can be “long lived and impotent” in the following sense: “Stable government may be a facilitating condition, but is certainly not a sufficient condition for effective government” (Sartori 1997: 113). Thus,

according to Linz, we must ask the question whether “stability and continuity of leadership and cabinets in coalition governments, and long terms in office by the same people, necessarily mean better government in terms of policy outputs” (Linz 1998: 28).<sup>3</sup> In this context, Linz argues that, as a result of coalition discipline and respect for each other, governments do not set about political problems (see Linz 1998: 28). Because of that, Linz prefers a regime change or, at least a personnel change, at every possible interval no matter how the change comes into fruition: “Alternation within a coalition may be as good as alternation as the result of an election” (Linz 1998: 28).

Sartori criticises the suggestion of the concept of government stability and points out that stable (in the meaning of long-lived) governments are not simultaneously effective. Cabinets might be long-lived and inactive together: “[...] their duration over time is by no means an indicator and even less an activator of efficiency or efficacy” (Sartori 1997: 113). Sartori disapproved of the assumption that the “mere duration” of a cabinet makes activities of the government automatically effective and efficient. In this regard, for evaluating a stable government one can not consider the “mere duration”. In fact, it is necessary to find a wider approach which regards and rates in detail the governmental defining factors. Thus, Sartori argues against using the concept of Powell (1982), who concludes that government stability is a relevant factor for the quality and stability of democratic systems. It is essential: “Stable democracy (i.e., regime stability) is one thing, stable government quite another thing” (Sartori 1997: 113).

Outside of the issues of duration, efficiency and efficacy, another approach is represented by Siegfried (1956), who concentrates on the personnel. Siegfried studies the frequent changes of government in the IV. French Republic between the years 1946 and 1958 and comes to the conclusion that the French system was characterised by an extensive continuity of governmental personnel. The author’s conclusion is that a continuity of governmental activities exists which would mean that frequent changes do not bring about unstable governments.

---

<sup>3</sup> The output dimension of government is especially salient in Eastern Europe, given the problems of the transition. In the case of Estonia, the frequent changes of government do not seem to have influenced government efficiency negatively, since this northernmost of the Baltic republics continues to be referred to as the exemplary transition state.

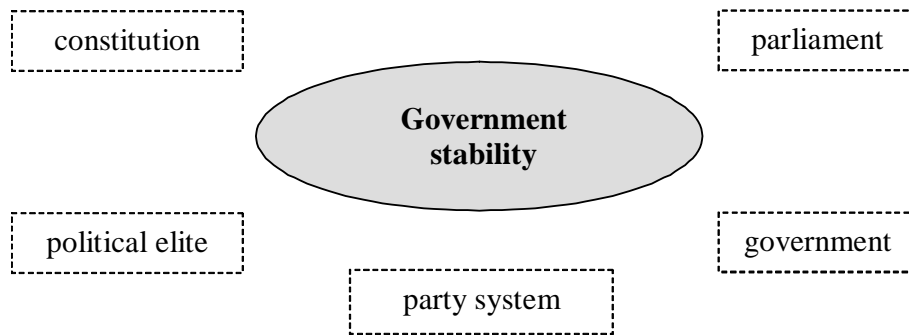
All these observations make it clear that government stability cannot be measured in terms of a government's term in office alone. Rather, the effectiveness of government also has to be taken into account. In general, stable governments might have a potentially higher effectiveness in terms of policy output than unstable cabinets (see Sartori 1997: 113; Harfst 2001: 2).

How do these theories relate to the CEE? Are the frequently changing cabinets an advantage or a disadvantage to the system? Do they relieve or compress mounting political pressure? Do they solve problems and create useful reforms or do they serve to hinder useful policy-making? Holmes (1997) favours a vigorous and stable government. This is rather essential for coping with the already mentioned "dilemma of simultaneity" (Offe 1991). Differing from already consolidated societies, governments in CEE can not rest upon developed civil societies; they are in a state of development (Holmes 1997: 3). In that way a bottom-up transition (starting from the civil society) can not take place. Consequently, the transition process is the main task of the government and the cabinet has to manage it by developing political directives as a trickle-down process.

What should a detailed analysis of government stability look like? It seems useful to isolate several factors. Previous research examining the stability of governments focused on parliamentary parties and their influence on the formation of a government. However, it seems more promising to combine this actor-oriented analysis with an examination of institutional factors.

It thus seems necessary to analyse the political system of Estonia as a whole. In the following sections, the constitutional framework for the Estonian system of government will be highlighted. Then the author will focus on the party system, on the parliament, and on the government, as well as on the political elite. Government stability is thus seen as influenced by these five variables, so that a close examination of these single factors allows for a comprehensive evaluation of government stability.

Diagram 1: Influences on the Stability of Governments<sup>4</sup>



### 1.5 Measuring Change of Government

The following criteria for identifying changes of governments were used:

- Generally, the tenure of a government ends with the election of a new parliament (see Sanders and Herman 1977: 353).
- Moreover, the election of a new prime minister, or a change in the governing coalition—one party leaving or joining the coalition—counts as a change of government.
- Likewise, the change from a majority government to a minority government is a change of government. Concerning the election of a new prime minister, it is important to note that no distinction is made here between “political” or “non-political” reasons for such a change, since “a resignation generally changes the political situation in some significant aspects” (Woldendorp, Keman and Budge 1993: 5).
- In addition, a successful vote of no confidence against the prime minister also marks a change of government. In contrast, if only some cabinet ministers resign or are exchanged in a reshuffling of the government cabinet, there is no relevant change of government. A vote of no confidence against a cabinet minister, which is possible under Article 97 of the Estonian Constitution, cannot produce a change of government. This institution constitutes a significant instrument of parliamentary power against the government, but it generally does not influence the overall shape of the political agenda or the stability of the government directly.

---

<sup>4</sup> own compilation

## **2. Government Stability in Estonia: Wishful Thinking or Reality?**

### **2.1 The Estonian Context**

The results of the March 2003 elections of the 4<sup>th</sup> Riigikogu hardly show a clear mandate for a new government coalition. Both the left-populist Center Party and the newly founded “Res Publica” gained about 25% of the vote each. The next government of Estonia, already the ninth (since 1992), will thus be a coalition government formed by three parties.

Nine different administrations over eleven years of independence do not seem to testify to a high level of stability. The average term for each administration was only 15.4 months. But can we assess the stability of government simply by referring to this average value?

Such calculations have limited value, since, especially during the transition, in countries of Eastern Europe, government changes are relatively frequent. Thus, we should not merely state the change in political power, but moreover focus on the respective reasons for a change of government.

The European Union (EU), in the course of the negotiations with potential new member states from Eastern Europe, demands and insists on particular political conditions. The heads of states and governments agreed in their Copenhagen meeting that new member states need to exhibit “not only stable democratic institutions and competitive market economies, but also the ‘ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic, and monetary union’” (European Council 1993). Estonia is still widely regarded as one of the paradigm cases of a democratic transition. Yet, is it not the case that a successful management of the transition process presupposes stable governments? How does Estonia manage to establish and pursue a consistent course of modernization, given the apparent instability of the governments? Thus, it seems questionable whether government stability in Estonia is a reality or whether it is merely wishful thinking.

## 2.2 Former Governments

As previously mentioned, the 2003 elections result in the establishment of the ninth administration so far. It is notable that among the former governments there were three broad government coalitions that held power for more than 24 months. Two further governments were in office for almost 12 months, while three government cabinets could secure parliamentary approval for only a few months. It is to be assumed that the government changes were caused by factors immanent to the system. For this reason, a closer analysis of the changes of governments seems warranted.

The following table will provide a brief outline of the eight administrations so far:

Table 1: Previous Governments of Estonia<sup>5</sup>

#	period of government	government durability in months	Prime Minister and party affiliation	number of parliamentary seats <sup>6</sup>
1.	21.10.1992 - 08.11.1994	24	Mart Laar (I)	51
2.	08.11.1994 - 17.04.1995	5	Andres Tarand (-)	32
3.	17.04.1995 - 06.11.1995	7	Tiit Vähi (EK)	57
4.	06.11.1995 - 21.11.1996	12	Tiit Vähi (EK)	60
5.	21.11.1996 - 17.03.1997	4	Tiit Vähi (EK)	41 (+16)
6.	17.03.1997 - 25.03.1999	24	Mart Siimann (EK)	41 (+16)
7.	25.03.1999 - 28.01.2002	34	Mart Laar (I)	53
8.	28.01.2002 - 10.04.2003	15	Siim Kallas (RK)	46 (+14)
9.	10.04.2003 - 24.03.2005	24	Juhan Parts (RP)	60

It seems accordingly useful to analyse not only the duration of a government but also the distribution of seats in the Riigikogu. It is remarkable that minority governments are no rarity in the Estonian system. Only half of the governments so far had their own, however marginal, majority in parliament. The other government cabinets depended on the support of another party for their work in the Riigikogu. All governments consisted of at least two, usually even three

<sup>5</sup> Premierships refers to the source: <http://www.riik.ee/en/valitsus>, 03.05.2002

<sup>6</sup> The amount in brackets refers to the number of parliamentary seats of parties who supports the minority government.

coalition partners. Is this a possible source of instability?

Most studies so far have examined the conditions for the formation of a government. They accordingly focus on the parliamentary parties that are actors in the formations of a government. The research of Blondel (1968) and Duverger (1973) is exemplary for this approach. These studies make the reverse conclusion about government stability: The more parties are represented in parliament, the more instable the resulting governments must be. Duverger supports this analysis by stating that a fragmented party system generally necessitates coalitions, and that coalitions are liable to tensions and conflicts. Thus, the danger of the coalition's failure as a result of insurmountable differences is always present. According to this logic, coalition governments are more likely to break apart than one-party governments. In which way do the governing parties in Estonia pose a risk for the country's stability? What were the reasons for the disintegration in the respective coalitions?

## **2.3 Variables of the Stability of Governments**

### *2.3.1 The Constitutional Framework*

Estonia, with its 1992 Constitution, is a clear example of a parliamentary system of government. The president has strictly limited powers. His authority is generally confined to representative functions. The most important presidential authority is the right to nominate a candidate for the post of the prime minister and to entrust him with the task of forming a government. The parliament, the Riigikogu, is a single-chamber parliament in a unitary state. The constitutional framework does not provide extraordinary conditions, but the Estonian electoral laws have important peculiarities. The electoral law has proven to be unnecessarily complicated for the purpose of counting the votes; the intended effects could be reached with far simpler regulations. A reform of the electoral laws in 1995 has changed little.

Moreover, as a consequence of a rigid citizenship law, about 30% of the overall Estonian population is excluded from national elections. This number should lead us to question the inclusiveness of the elections, and it hints at a democracy deficit. In spite of these points, the constitutional framework of Estonia does not contain features that are particularly conducive to instability.



### *2.3.2 A Fragmented Party System with Little Polarization*

The Estonian party system has its origins in the “popular front,” an umbrella organization of classical dissidents, reform Communists, and nationally oriented movements (Merkel 1999: 433). Once the political goal of independence was achieved, the umbrella coalition disintegrated due to the heterogeneity of the participating groups. The result was a party pluralism that at times took extreme forms, partially encouraged through the lack of regulatory mechanisms. For example, 38 parties competed in the 1992 elections. The later elections saw far less competing parties due to a tightening of the legal regulations. For example, in November 1998 the Riigikogu prohibited election alliances from running for national elections (see Beichelt 2001a: 40). We can only estimate the direction into which future development will head, but it seems safe to assume that the concentration of the party system will lead to a decline in fragmentation, so that we might hope for stabilization.

Over the last years, the Estonian party system has shown clear tendencies in the direction of stabilization. Yet, it is far from clear whether or not the Estonian party system will eventually approach western European patterns. Up to this point, coalition parties were evaluated and elected based on the so-called “bread-and-butter” policies rather than on ideologies or deeper social conflicts (see Grofman, Mikkel and Taagepera 2000: 351). This fact can partially account for the parties’ gains and losses of votes that were sometimes extraordinarily large. This pattern mirrors the popular disappointments that soon succeeded the euphoria of independence. In spite of regular changes of government after elections and the resulting changes in the ideological outlook of the government, the respective coalition parties managed to pursue remarkably consistent policies. Aside from a strong orientation towards market economy and the West, this consistency is due to the fact that this value-orientation has been adopted by leading political personalities like Lennart Meri, Arnold Rüütel, Edgar Savisaar, and Tiit Vähi from the first elections in 1990 forward. The strong orientation toward political personalities continued in the following elections and still dominates Estonian politics.

Given that a party system can be classified as functioning when it “allows for finding and implementing political decisions within the specific situation of the country” (Mattusch 1996: 94), the Estonian party system is functioning in spite of a strong fragmentation combined with a low polarization. The basis for this consensus lies not the least in the parties’ consensus about relevant political issues, especially the economic reforms, NATO membership, and accession to

the European Union. In spite of these basic agreements, the parliament is shaped by numerous occasions of parliamentary group splitting, or members changing their affiliation. These trends often impede the search for a viable majority.

### *2.3.3 The Parliament: Defining Features of the Riigikogu*

Following the March 2003 elections, the now fourth Riigikogu since the 1992 elections is being constituted. An analysis of the composition of the previous three parliaments allows us to reach some preliminary conclusions.

The strong fragmentation of the party system has implications for the internal working methods of the parliament. Functioning party parliamentary groups of the Western European model are rarely found. This is due to the relatively small number of parliamentarians, while the number of parliamentary parties is high. This feature complicates the establishment of functioning working groups within the parliamentary party groups. It is quite common that parliamentarians change their party group affiliation. Because of the small size of most parliamentary groups, an internal division of labor is often not possible and would make little sense (see Lagerspetz and Maier 2002: 77). Beichelt (2001b) holds that the weakness of parliamentary factions in the Riigikogu is caused not only by the relatively insignificant role of parliamentary factions in the legislative process. More importantly, this weakness mirrors a more general weakness of political parties in the political system (see Beichelt 2001b: 58). Reetz (1995) concurs with this line of analysis. He concludes that the composition of parliamentary party groups is connected to trends that are rooted in the low level of polarization among the political parties. These parties, moreover, do not differ very much in their political positions. In addition, many parliamentary groups do not map neatly onto political parties, so that it is often the case that many parliamentarians are not members of any of the participating parties (Reetz 1995: 315). The position of the parliamentary groups is rather weak, but their influence varies according to the distribution of seats and the degree of party political polarization. Also, the effects that new regulations of political parties will have on the party system and the formation of parliamentary groups are still unclear. In a long-term perspective we might expect some consolidation, but at this moment parliamentary groups cannot serve as a guarantor of government stability in Estonia.

Table 2: Distribution of Members of Parliament according to their Experience in the Legislative Periods of 1992-2003<sup>7</sup>

<b>legislative period</b>	<b>1992-1995</b>	<b>1995-1999</b>	<b>1999-2003</b>
Member of Parliament (MP) in			
one legislative period	101	58	52
two legislative periods	-	43	28
three legislative periods	-	-	21
<i>total number of MP</i>	<i>101</i>	<i>101</i>	<i>101</i>

Among the parliamentarians, only a relatively small number are “professional politicians,” so that the composition of parliament does not show a high stability, since many parliamentarians do not return after the next elections. Since changing voter preferences leads to changes of government, and the coalition governments are unstable, the Estonian political system makes it hard for individuals to become professional career politicians. In addition, regulations prohibit holding both a government post such as minister and a seat in parliament, so that there is a constant turnover and new parliamentarians join as others take governments positions. Frequent changes of government thus cause a high turnover among ministers and parliamentarians. Moreover, Estonian parliamentarians do not enjoy a high social status: while the parliamentarians elected in 1992 still enjoyed high prestige, the levels of social esteem continuously declined thereafter (Kask 1996: 199; Meurs and Berg 2001: 71). Considering the relatively low levels of social trust and esteem that parliamentarians enjoy, becoming a career politician does not seem a very attractive option.

Estonian parliamentarians are highly educated: at times, 92 per cent of the members of parliament held an academic degree. This high percentage of parliamentarians with academic degrees is certainly exceptional, but can be explained with reference to historical developments. Estonia, having been the model republic of the Soviet Union, provided excellent formal education for many. As a result of these efforts, the new Estonian political and economic elites have, for example, the advantage of excellent language skills (see Meurs and Berg 2001: 77). The parliamentarians can thus be recognized as a class of highly educated elite.

Concerning the age structure, it is remarkable that although the range is between 25 and 70 years,

---

<sup>7</sup> Source: own compilation adapted from the register of Members of Parliament (available from <http://www.vvk.ee>, 07.05.2002). A complete list of all Members of Parliament in all three legislative periods is attached in the appendix.

the average age of the parliamentarians is comparatively low: 48 years. The low average age of the political elite is certainly due to the radical break with the political past of the Soviet Union. This rupture opened the way into a political career for many young people. In contrast, the few current older parliamentarians had already been reform communists during the times of the Estonian Soviet Republic.

In conclusion, one defining feature of the Riigikogu is its composition of comparatively young, highly educated parliamentarians. However, most of these members are not regular career politicians but only serve for a limited time period. Again, future developments might bring changes.

#### *2.3.4 High Fluctuation and the Professionalization of the Government*

The executive branch of the Estonian government is composed of the prime minister and up to fourteen ministers. The cabinet is organized on the principle of collective responsibility for cabinet actions, so that the prime minister is traditionally only a *primus inter pares*. There is no formal constitutional authority for the prime minister to determine the main policy positions of the government (*Richtlinienkompetenz*), such as it can be found in Article 65 of the German Basic Law. However, the analysis by Lagerspetz and Maier concludes that the prime minister as some prerogative akin to an “informal” authority to determine the guiding principles of government policies (Lagerspetz and Maier 2002: 79). These scholars, who analyze government practice with reference to the text of the Constitution, state that the prime minister’s special tasks of representing the government and coordinating its activities are crucial for answering this question. Yet, this authority is relativized because the prime minister’s powers and authority are primarily constrained by the distribution of powers within the coalition and the cabinet. So far, the seats of the coalition partners have always demanded key cabinet posts. Accordingly, personal or party-political tensions might easily have repercussions for cabinet decisions. In this case, the lack of an explicit clause granting the prime minister the authority to determine the basic policy positions of the government could be detrimental to the political system. Such a clause could accelerate the decision-making process within the cabinet and could have positive effects on the still fragile mechanisms of the political process. Yet, given the context of the Soviet past, the decision not to spell out such an authority is understandable. Accordingly, it is clear that the

personality of the prime ministers, and the type of leadership they embody, gain in importance.

From the date of independence in 1992 up to 2002, the cabinets combined a total of 76 ministers serving below five different prime ministers (see Müller-Rommel and Sootla 2001: 23). Almost half of the cabinet ministers had previous experience as ministers and were thus experienced in the Estonian political process, while 54 percent held a cabinet post for the first time. In comparison to other countries, these 54 percent show a high continuity across cabinets. However, in order to assess the strength of the continuities, one needs to take into account the reasons that led to the dissolution of governments.

Table 3: Proportion of Held Offices by Ministers (1992-2003)<sup>8</sup>

<b>Proportion of ministers who were member of the cabinet</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
in one position	53,9%	41
in two positions	22,4%	17
in three positions	13,2%	10
in four positions	7,9%	6
in five positions	2,6%	2
<b>a total of</b>	<b>100,0%</b>	<b>76</b>
Proportion of female cabinet members	13,2%	10

Only three of the eight changes of government so far can be traced to the disintegration of the respective coalitions. Among these cases, one coalition change was due to a political scandal around one cabinet minister. The other two cases were caused by party-political differences on the local level. Three further governments were not reelected in regular elections. Finally, in two cases personal misconduct of the prime minister was the cause for the ending of the government coalition. Accordingly, it is clear that an analysis of the reasons for the government changes needs to be part of the more comprehensive analysis of government stability.

---

<sup>8</sup> The total of 76 ministers includes the cabinet of Siim Kallas. The government of Juhan Parts which came into office after the 2003 elections is not regarded anymore. A detailed survey of all ministers over the period of 1992 until 2003 is attached in the appendix.

### *2.3.5 High Continuity of Personnel and Elite Agreement on Key Policy Issues*

As shown before, among the cabinet ministers roughly one half had prior government experience, the continuity of key personnel is even higher within the parties. Since there is substantial agreement among the Estonian political elites about the most important policy choices, policy disagreements leading to a separation within a party are not likely to arise. This substantial agreement also favors the continuity of elites within the political parties. Concerning the issue of joining NATO, the Estonian elites emphasise the security concerns vis-à-vis Russia. Estonian elites think that the accession to the European Union would bring general political and economic advantages. Moreover, the accession to the EU is seen as a “logical conclusion from the deeply rooted cultural affinities of Estonia and Western Europe,” and will bring additional “stability benefits” (Bedarff and Schürmann 1998: 94 et sqq.). Thus, Estonia’s basic policy options in foreign policy, and by extension in domestic policies, are rarely disputed, disagreements about details notwithstanding.

## **2.4 Review of Estonia’s 9<sup>th</sup> Government**

Since 1992, Estonia had nine governments since becoming independent. The cabinet of Juhan Parts has been in office starting from the elections in 2003<sup>9</sup> and ending in March 2005. Parts governed with a liberal-conservative coalition of Eesti Reformierakond (Reform Party) and Eestimaa Rahvaliid (Estonian Peoples Union) as junior partners. These three parties had a broad parliamentary majority of 60 seats in Riigikogu and it was the second time after the cabinet of Tiit Vähi II that a government in Estonia could rely on such a majority. Res Publica (RP) and the Reform Party (RK) held five ministries each and the Estonian Peoples Union (ER) four ministers. The following table shows the distribution of ministries in terms of party affiliation as of February 2005:

---

<sup>9</sup> Res Publica achieved in the 2003 national elections 24.6%, in contrast their result in the elections to the European Parliament 2004 was 6.7%. The 2003 elections have shown again, how ingenuous the Estonian political system is to this day: Res Publica was founded in 2001 and since 2002, Parts has been the chairman.

Table 4: Composition of the Estonian Government (as of February 2005)<sup>10</sup>

<b>function</b>	<b>name</b>	<b>party affiliation</b>
Prime Minister	Juhan Parts	RP
Minister of Agriculture	Ester Tuiksoo	ER
Minister of Culture	Urmas Paet	RK
Minister of Defense	Jaak Jõeriüt	RK
Minister of Economics and Communications	Andrus Ansip	RK
Minister of Education and Science	Toivo Maimets	RP
Minister of Environment	Villu Reiljan	ER
Minister of Finance	Taavi Veskimägi	RP
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Kristiina Ojuland	RK
Minister of Interior	Margus Leivo	ER
Minister of Justice	Ken-Marti Vaher	RP
Minister of Population	Paul-Eerik Rummo	RK
Minister of Regional Affairs	Jaan Õunapuu	ER
Minister of Social Affairs	Marko Pomerants	RP

Actually, there has been a change in the composition of ministers. Kristiina Ojuland, who was Foreign Minister since 2002, was dismissed on February 10th by President Arnold Rüütel on the request of PM Parts. The dismissal of Ojuland<sup>11</sup> arose from the fact that up to 100 secret documents disappeared from her office between 1996 and 2004 and that she had refused to accept responsibility for any misconduct. Ojuland argued “that the missing document incidents did not pertain to her, even though she had been foreign minister since 2002” (Baltic Times 2005a). Her dismissal has created political turmoil in Estonia, as in Ojuland’s Reform Party, a junior coalition partner with Res Publica. The actual change in the composition of the Estonian Government was not only the precursor for a new coalition crisis but also for a change of cabinet. The latter became apparent by statements such as: “My opinion is that the same alliance may continue, but then there must be a different prime minister” (Atonen<sup>12</sup> in Baltic Times 2005a).

By replacing Ojuland, Parts acted consequently as an ambitious Prime Minister who used his general responsibility for the general guidelines of policy. This was also predicted by the national

<sup>10</sup> own compilation according to <http://www.riik.ee/valitsus/?id=1199>, 12.02.2005

<sup>11</sup> The former Foreign Minister is one of the few Estonian politicians who is experienced and knows the political day life from differing viewpoints. Her career started in 1992 as a specialist in the Ministry of Justice; in 1992 she switched to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as 1st Secretary of Political Department and has been Representative of the Republic of Estonia to the Council of Europe. From 1994 to 2002, she has been a Member of the Riigikogu. During the period from 1996 to 2002, she was also Member of the Tallinn City Council.

<sup>12</sup> Meelis Atonen is deputy chairman of the Reform Party.

press, which mentioned that “the sacking was a demonstration of force” and presumes Parts “may very well remain on his feet for his entire term” (Baltic Times 2005b). Ojuland was the fifth replacement in the 9<sup>th</sup> government after independence. Before, PM Parts had already replaced the minister of defence, the minister of economics affairs and communication, the minister of agriculture and the minister of finance.

Discrepancies between the three national coalition parties became obvious when the foreign minister was replaced. Moreover, the coalition in Tallinn’s city parliament between Res Publica and Reform Party was broken up. In the past, most local political conflicts had influence on the national level. Therefore, the potential for conflict was at its highest point since Part’s cabinet came into office nearly two years ago and “left the three-party coalition vulnerable to further infighting” (Baltic Times 2005c).

At last, the determining factor for a change of government was the vote of no confidence against the Minister of Justice Vaher (RP). A new anti-corruption program<sup>13</sup> prepared by his ministry would uphold goals which “were contradictory to the ideals of a democratic society” and rather, “the anti-corruption program reminded Estonians of the set-up and trials practiced during Stalin’s totalitarian rule” (Baltic Times 2005c). In this politically explosive situation, the two coalition partners Estonian Peoples Union and Reform Party initiated a vote of no confidence on Vaher in parliament, which was ultimately successful. As a result of this initiated vote Parts also resigned from office - according to §§ 8 and 9 of the “Government of Republic Act”.

Estonian political life is continues to be determined by scandals and irregularities. However, replacements of various ministers can, but must not, influence the stability of government at the same time. For Estonia’s political future, the duration of political terms will rely greatly on how various politicians conduct themselves (within personal affairs). Up to now, most Prime Ministers were replaced as a result of their personal lapses. Perhaps a shift from personal to political lapses has taken place but it is too early to predict.

---

<sup>13</sup> The program contained so-called “indicators” – the number of criminal cases scheduled for court. Such examples included 63 corruption cases for local municipality officials, while many more were neatly distributed across Estonia’s counties (Baltic Times 2005c).



## **2.5 Conclusion: Government Stability in spite of Frequent Government Changes**

Estonian governments exhibit a high degree of stability. Although governments changed frequently in recent years, there are no causes for these changes of government that are immanent in the political system, as this analysis has shown. The only plausible factor is a strongly fragmented party system. However, this fragmentation coexists with a low degree of polarization, so that there is a strong consensus in matters of foreign policy, and, in spite of minor issues, a strong overall agreement in matters of domestic policy. The fragmentation of the party system is thus relativized by the low degree of polarization.

The party system influences government stability in yet another important way: Since the most important parties have a high continuity in their leadership circles, personal differences between the leaders of different parties regularly complicate the cooperation of different political parties or even lead to the termination of a coalition government. A closer examination of the causes of the government changes so far supports this hypothesis: three out of eight government changes so far were caused by the disintegration of the coalition, while three other governments failed to get the necessary votes in the next elections of the Riigikogu. But even throughout such government changes, such as the 1995 formation of a government of the Estonian Farmers' Union, the Estonian Coalition Party, and the Center Party that some interpreted as a "move to the left," the main parameters of Estonian politics remained unchanged. The reason for this stability lies in the consensus on political compromises and the resulting continuity of consistently pursued policies of domestic reform with a strong Western orientation.

The two remaining changes of governments were caused by personal lapses of the prime ministers followed by a successful vote of no confidence. Mart Laar's first term in office and Tiit Vähi's third cabinet ended after their involvement in scandals. In the reverse conclusion, we can assume that the checks and balances in the Estonian political system are intact. Thus, there are no observable causes for government instability that are internal to the political system.

Concerning the elites, we can draw the following picture: Due to the marginalization of the Communist party and the resulting lack of party protectionism for filling important positions, a new generation of politicians entered the scene. They are highly educated, relatively young, and generally agree about their fundamental political goals. An analysis of the holders of cabinet positions provides ample evidence for this conclusion.

A survey of all cabinet ministers since 1992 including the eighth government of Prime Minister

Kallas reveals that almost half of the appointed ministers had already held at least two other offices. Approximately 25 per cent of the ministers had been cabinet members three times or more often, so that we can safely assume that they are very familiar with the everyday tasks and problems of government work. Especially Tiit Vähi and Mart Siimans showed a tendency of appointing the same persons for the cabinet posts in a new government, and often even the same persons for the same cabinet posts. We can accordingly observe a high degree of continuity in the government personnel. In a reverse conclusion, we can state that according to the theory of Siegfried (1956), this continuity indicates a high degree of government stability.

In order to assess the continuities in the government personnel more comprehensively, parliamentarians were included in the study. For parliamentarians, however, we cannot observe a high continuity across elections. No more than ten per cent of all parliamentarians had a mandate in all three parliaments, but approximately 50 percent have served in at least two parliaments. Still, we should be cautious and not jump to the conclusion that the parliamentarians are in fact professional politicians. In addition to the relatively low level of experience with the parliamentary process, we have to note the fact that the Constitution mandates to resign from the seat in parliament upon accepting a cabinet post. Thus, candidates not elected in the first round may get the opportunity to serve at least part of the term. However, due to the frequent changes of government within a comparatively short period of time, members joining parliament while the term is in process have little time and opportunity to become fully acquainted with their tasks and opportunities in the political process. Again, the cabinets of Tiit Vähi and Mart Siimann are an exception to this rule since the continuity among key personnel was much higher.

It has become apparent that government stability cannot be understood in reference to the mere numbers of governments throughout a certain time period alone. Rather, a detailed analysis paying attention to the peculiarities of the political system is necessary for arriving at a comprehensive analysis of government stability. In spite of frequent government changes, domestic tensions, and increasing political apathy among the population, Estonia has managed to embark upon a successful path of political reforms. A broad underlying consensus is the basis for the fundamental political goals and the consistency of the reform policies, and thus for a government stability that is not merely wishful thinking but reality.

## Bibliography

### Document:

Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, available from: <http://www.president.ee/en/estonia/constitution.php>

### Literature:

- Baltic Times (2005a): Rützel releases Ojulaand of her duties, available from [http://www.baltictimes.com/art.php?art\\_id=11947](http://www.baltictimes.com/art.php?art_id=11947), 09.02.2005
- Baltic Times (2005b): Iceman stayeth [sic!], available from [http://www.baltictimes.com/art.php?art\\_id=11969](http://www.baltictimes.com/art.php?art_id=11969), 18.02.2005
- Baltic Times (2005c): Government teeters on edge of collapse, available from [http://www.baltictimes.com/art.php?art\\_id=12291](http://www.baltictimes.com/art.php?art_id=12291), 16.03.2005
- Bedarff, Hildegard and Bernd Schürmann (1998): NATO und EU aus der Perspektive Ostmitteleuropas: Meinungsbilder der Eliten in Polen, der Tschechischen Republik, Estland und Lettland, Münster
- Beichelt, Timm (2001a): Demokratische Konsolidierung im postsozialistischen Europa – Die Rolle der politischen Institutionen, Opladen
- Beichelt, Timm (2001b): Muster parlamentarischer Entscheidungsproduktion in Mitteleuropa, in: Wiesenthal, Helmut: Gelegenheit und Entscheidung: Policies und Politics erfolgreicher Transformationsforschung, Wiesbaden, pp. 32-92
- Berglund, Sten, Tomas Hellén and Frank H. Aarebrot (1998): The Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe, Cheltenham
- Blondel, Jean (1968): Party Systems and Patterns of Government in Western Democracies, in: Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 180-203
- Dahl, Robert (1971): Polyarchy: participation and opposition, New Haven
- Duverger, Maurice (1973): Les parties politiques, Paris
- European Council (1993): European Council in Copenhagen: Presidency Conclusions, 21-22 June
- Grofman, Bernard, Evald Mikkel, and Rein Taagepera (2000): Fission and Fusion of Parties in Estonia, 1987-1999, in: Journal of Baltic Studies, Vol. 31, No. 4, pp. 329-357
- Harfst, Philipp (2001): Regierungsstabilität in Osteuropa. Der Einfluss von Parlamenten und Parteien, Veröffentlichung des Wissenschaftszentrums Berlin für Sozialforschung, Nr. FS III 01-204, Berlin
- Holmes, Leslie (1997): The Democratic State or State Democracy? Problems of Post-Communist Transition, in: [www.iue.it/RSC/WP-Texts/holmes.html](http://www.iue.it/RSC/WP-Texts/holmes.html), 20.05.2002
- Kask, Peet (1996): Institutional Development of the Parliament of Estonia, in: Olson, David M. and Philip Norton: The New Parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe, London, pp. 193-212
- Lagerspetz, Mikko and Konrad Maier (2002): Das politische System Estlands, in: Ismayr, Wolfgang (Hrsg.): Die politischen Systeme Osteuropas, Opladen, pp. 69-107
- Laver, Michael and Kenneth A. Shepsle (1998): Events, Equilibria, and Government Survival, in: American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 28-54
- Lijphart, Arend (1984): Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries, New Haven/London
- Linz, Juan J. (1978): The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown and Reequilibration, Baltimore
- Linz, Juan J. (1998): Democracy's Time Constraint, in: International Political Science Review, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 19-37
- Mattusch, Katrin (1996): Vielfalt trotz ähnlicher Geschichte - Die drei baltischen Staaten und ihre unterschiedlichen Parteiensysteme, in: Segert, Dieter: Spätsozialismus und Parteienbildung in Osteuropa nach 1989, Berlin, pp. 93-118
- Merkel, Wolfgang (1999): Systemtransformation, Opladen
- Meurs, Wim van and Eiki Berg (2001): Estland, in: Weidenfeld, Werner: Den Wandel gestalten - Strategien der Transformation, Band 2, Dokumentation der internationalen Recherche, Gütersloh, pp. 63-85
- Müller-Rommel, Ferdinand and Georg Sootla (2001): Estonia, in: Blondel, Jean and Ferdinand Müller-Rommel: Cabinets in Eastern Europe, London, pp. 17-28
- Offe, Claus (1991): Capitalism by Democratic Design? Democratic Theory Facing the Triple Transformation in Central Europe, in: Social Research Vol. 58, No. 4, pp. 865-892

- Powell, G. Bingham (1982): *Contemporary Democracies. Participation, Stability and Violence*, Cambridge
- Reetz, Axel (1995): *Wahlen im Baltikum seit 1990. Parlamente in den Paradoxien der Selbstbestimmung* in: Steffani, Winfried and Uwe Thaysen (eds.): *Demokratie in Europa: Zur Rolle der Parlamente*, Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen (ZParl), Sonderband 1, Opladen, pp. 300-323
- Sanders, David and Valentine Herman (1977): *The Stability and Survival of Governments in Western Europe*, in: *Acta Politica*, Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 346-377
- Sartori, Giovanni (1997): *Comparative Constitutional Engineering. An Inquiry into Structures, Incentives and Outcomes*, London
- Schmitter, Philippe C. and Javier Santiso (1998): *Three Temporal Dimensions to the Consolidation of Democracy*, in: *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 69-92
- Siegfried, André (1956): *Stable Instability in France*, in: *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 34, No. 3, pp. 394-404
- Williams, Philip M. (1964): *Crisis and Compromise: Politics in the Fourth Republic*, London.
- Woldendorp, Jaap, Hans Keman and Ian Budge (1993): *The Stability of Parliamentary Democracies. Duration, Type and Termination of Governments*, in: *European Journal of Political Research*, Special Issue: *Political Data 1945-1990: Party Government in 20 Democracies*, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 1-119

# Appendix

## Election results in Estonia since 1992

### ELECTIONS 1992

turnout: 66.8%	20.09.1992	
party	percentage of votes	number of mandates
Isamaa	22.0	29
Eesti Koonderakond	13.6	17
Eestimaa Rahvarinne	12.2	15
Mõõdukad	9.7	12
Eesti Rahvusliku Sõltumatuse Partei	8.7	10
Valimisliit Sõltumatud Kuningriiklased	7.1	8
Valimisliit Eesti Kodanik	6.8	8
Valimisliit Rohelised	2.6	1
Eesti Ettevõtjate Erakond	2.3	1
other	15.0	-
total	100	101

Source: Reetz (1995: 304)

### ELECTIONS 1995

turnout: 68.9%	05.03.1995	
party	percentage of votes	number of mandates
Koonderakond ja Maarahva Ühendu	32.2	41
Eesti Reformierakond	16.4	19
Eesti Keskerakond	14.2	16
Eesti Rahvusliku Sõltumatuse Partei + Isamaa	7.9	8
Mõõdukad	6.0	6
Meie kodu on Eestimaa	5.9	6
Parempoolsed	5.0	5
other	12.4	-
total	100	101

Source: Berglund; Hellén and Aarebrot (1998: 83)

## ELECTIONS 1999

turnout: 57.4%	07.03.1999	
party	percentage of votes	number of mandates
Eesti Keskerakond	23.4	28
Isamaa	16.1	18
Eesti Reformierakond	16.0	18
Mõõdukad	15.2	17
Eesti Koonderakond*	7.6	7
Eesti Maarahva Erakond*	7.3	7
Estonian United People's Party	6.1	6
other	8.3	-
total	100	101

Source: Lagerspetz and Maier (2002: 78)

\* Estonians People's Union (Eestimaa Rahvaliid) emerged from a fusion of Estonian Country People's Party and Coalition Party in October 1999. Estonians People's Union supported the government since the change of the Prime Minister in January 2002 till March 2003.

## ELECTIONS 2003

turnout: 58.2%	02.03.2003	
party	percentage of votes	number of mandates
Eesti Keskerakond	25.4	28
Res Publica	24.6	28
Eesti Reformierakond	17.7	19
Eestimaa Rahvaliid	13.0	13
Erakond Isamaaliit	7.3	7
Rahvaerakond Mõõdukad	7.0	6
other	5.0	-
total	100	101

Source: Estonian National Electoral Committee

## Survey of eminent Estonian political parties<sup>14</sup>

English notation	Estonian notation	abbr.
Estonian Coalition Party	Eesti Koonderakond	EK
Estonian Country People's Party	Eesti Maarahva Erakond	EME
Estonian Reform Party	Eesti Reformierakond	RK
Estonian United People's Party	Eestimaa Ühendatud Rahvapartei	EÜR
Estonians People's Union <sup>15</sup>	Eestimaa Rahvaliit	ER
Estonian Centre Party	Eesti Keskerakond	K
Estonian Christian Democratic Union	Eesti Kristlik Demokraatlik Liit	EVKE
Progressive Party <sup>16</sup>	Arengupartei	AP
Estonian Conservative Party	Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond	EKR
Estonian Liberal Democratic Union	Eesti Liberaaldemokraatlik Partei	EL
People's Party Moderates	Mõõdukad	M
Republican and Conservative Peoples' Party	Vabariiklaste ja Konservatiivide Rahvaerakond	VKR
Estonian Party of National Independence	Eesti Rahvusliku Soltumatuse Partei	ERSP
Fatherland Union - Pro Patria	Isamaa	I
Popular Front of Estonia	Eestimaa Rahvarinne	---
Electoral coalition of the Coalition Party and the Rural Union <sup>17</sup>	Koonderakond ja Maarahva Ühendus	KMÜ
Union for the Republic - Res Publica	Ühendus Vabariigi Eest - Res Publica	RP
Electoral Coalition "Estonian Citizen"	Valimisliit "Eesti Kodanik"	---
Electoral Coalition "Independent Royalists"	Valimisliit "Sõltumatud Kuningriiklased"	---
Electoral Coalition "The Greens"	Valimisliit "Rohelised"	---
Estonian Entrepreneurs' Party	Eesti Ettevõtjate Erakond	---
Our Home is Estonia	Meie kodu on Eestimaa	MKoduE
The Right-Wingers (Republican and Conservative's People's Party)	Parempoolsed	Parem

<sup>14</sup> own compilation

<sup>15</sup> Estonians People's Union emerged from a fusion of Estonian Country People's Party and Coalition Party in October 1999.

<sup>16</sup> Emerged from a separation of the Estonian Centre Party in May 1996.

<sup>17</sup> Electoral coalition of the Coalition Party and the Rural Union for the 1995 election.



## Members of Parliament (of the previous three legislative periods)

NAME	1. LP 1992-95	2. LP 1995-1999	3. LP 1999-2003
Aare, Juhan	X	X	-
Adams, Jüri	X	X	X
Aimla, Priit	X	X	-
Alajoe, Sulev	X	-	-
Alatalu, Toomas	X	X	-
Allik, Jaak	-	X	-
Andrejev, Viktor	-	X	X
Ansip, Andrus	-	-	X
Anton, Olav	X	X	-
Arge, Tiit	X	-	-
Arjakas, Küлло	-	-	X
Arjukese, Rein	X	-	-
Arro, Lembit	X	X	-
Asmer, Toivo	-	-	X
<i>Benno, Tiina</i>	X	-	-
Betlem, Jaanus	X	X	-
<i>Eenmaa, Ivi</i>	-	-	X
Eero, Endel	-	X	-
Einer, Lauri	X	-	-
<i>Endre, Sirje</i>	-	-	X
Erm, Ants	X	-	-
Fjuk, Ignar	X	X	-
Glaase, Vahur	-	X	-
Gräzin, Igor	-	X	-
<i>Haabsaar, Epp</i>	X	-	-
<i>Hänni, Liia</i>	X	X	X
Hallaste, Illar	X	-	-
Hansen, Vootele	-	X	X
Hanson, Rein	X	-	-
Haug, Arvo	-	X	X
Heinapuu, Andres	X	-	-
Helme, Rein	X	-	-
Herkel, Andres	-	-	X
Herodes, Jaak	X	-	-
Hint, Mati	X	-	-
Ilves, Toomas Hendrik	-	-	X
Issakov, Sergei	-	X	-
Ivanov, Sergei	-	X	X
Jaakson, Arvo	-	-	X
<i>Jaani, Karin</i>	X	X	-
<i>Jäätma, Kadri</i>	-	-	X

NAME	1. LP 1992-95	2. LP 1995-1999	3. LP 1999-2003
Järlik, Rein	X	X	-
Järvesaar, Ants	-	X	-
Jürgenson, Kalle	X	-	X
Jürgenson, Toivo	X	X	X
Junti, Arvo	X	X	-
Juul, Tonu	X	-	-
Kaal, Vambo	X	X	X
Käärma, Ants	X	X	X
Käbin, Tiit	X	X	X
Kala, Aivar	X	-	-
Kallas, Raivo	-	X	-
Kallas, Siim	-	X	X
Kallo, Kalev	-	-	X
Kama, Kaido	X	X	-
Kannik, Indrek	X	-	-
Kaplinski, Jaan	X	-	-
Karemäe, Rein	-	X	-
Kask, Rein	-	X	-
Kauba, Tonu	-	-	X
Kelam, Tunne	X	X	X
<i>Kelam, Mari-Ann</i>	-	-	X
Kiir, Avo	X	-	-
Kiisk, Kaljo	-	X	X
Kikerpill, Rein	X	-	-
<i>Kilvet, Krista</i>	X	X	-
<i>Kirsipuu, Valve</i>	X	X	X
<i>Klaar, Liis</i>	-	-	X
Korda, Tonu	-	X	-
Kranich, Heiki	X	X	-
Kreitzberg, Peeter	-	-	X
Kross, Jaan	X	-	-
Küüts, Lembit	X	-	-
Kukk, Kalev	X	X	-
Kukk, Tonu-Reid	X	X	-
Kubo, Märt	-	X	-
Kulbok, Kalle	X	-	-
Koiv, Tonu	-	-	X
Korda, Tonu	X	-	-
Kotkas, Kalev	-	-	X
Kuks, Jaak-Hans	-	-	X
Laanoja, Ülo	X	-	-
Laar, Mart	X	X	X
Laht, Urmas	-	-	X
<i>Lauristin, Marju</i>	X	-	X

NAME	1. LP 1992-95	2. LP 1995-1999	3. LP 1999-2003
Leppik, Jaan	-	-	X
Leps, Ando	-	X	-
Ligi, Jürgen	-	X	X
Liiv, Anti	-	X	X
Liiv, Daimar	-	X	-
<i>Linde, Katrin</i>	X	-	-
Linde, Väino	-	-	X
Lipstock, Andres	-	X	X
Lippmaa, Endel	-	X	-
Lohmus, Ants-Enno	X	-	-
Lootsmann, Värner	-	-	X
Lorents, Peeter	X	X	-
Luik, Jüri	X	-	-
Lukas, Tonis	-	X	X
Made, Tiit	X	X	-
Mägi, Harald	-	X	-
Mändmets, Ilmar	X	X	-
Männik, Jaanus	-	X	X
<i>Märja, Talvi</i>	-	X	-
<i>Maripuu, Maret</i>	-	-	X
Marrandi, Jaanus	-	-	X
Maspanov, Nikolai	-	X	-
Meos, Mati	-	X	-
Mereste, Uno	X	X	X
Meri, Mart	-	-	X
Mikser, Sven	-	-	X
Mölder, Aavo	-	X	-
Mois, Jüri	-	-	X
Motsküla, Paul-Olev	X	-	-
Müüripeal, Villu	-	X	-
Neljas, Aap	X	X	-
Nestor, Eiki	-	X	X
Niitsoo, Viktor	X	-	-
Niklus, Mart-Olav	X	-	-
Nugis, Ülo	X	X	X
Nutt, Mart	X	-	X
Öövel, Andrus	-	X	-
<i>Ojuland, Kristiina</i>	-	X	X
Olesk, Peeter	-	-	X
Ounapuu, Harri	-	-	X
<i>Oviir, Siiri</i>	X	X	X
Paap, Endel	-	-	X
Paavo, Raivo	-	X	X
<i>Padrik, Jaana</i>	-	-	X

NAME	1. LP 1992-95	2. LP 1995-1999	3. LP 1999-2003
Pärnoja, Mihkel	X	X	X
Päts, Matti	X	-	-
Parder, Eldur	-	X	-
Parve, Ralf	X	-	-
Peets, Ülo	-	X	-
Pelisaar, Georg	-	-	X
Pikaro, Koit	-	-	X
Poder, Vambola	X	-	-
Pöör, Jan	-	X	X
Pold, Jüri	X	-	-
Raave, Kalev	X	-	-
Rätsep, Jüri	X	-	-
Raidal, Jaanus	X	-	-
Raig, Ivar	X	-	-
Raju, Olev	-	-	X
Rask, Märt	-	-	X
Raudla, Heiki	X	-	-
Raude, Kuno	X	-	-
<i>Raudnask, Valve</i>	-	X	-
Reiljan, Janno	-	-	X
Reiljan, Villu	-	X	X
Roosaare, K. Jaak	X	-	-
<i>Rosenberg, Viive</i>	-	-	X
Rüütel, Arnold	-	X	X
Rumessen, Vardo	X	-	-
Rummo, Paul-Erik	X	X	X
<i>Runge, Aino</i>	-	X	-
Ruusamäe, Rainis	-	-	X
Ruusmann, Ants	-	-	X
Saatpalu, Vello	X	-	-
<i>Salumäe, Erika</i>	-	-	X
Savi, Toomas	-	X	X
Savisaar, Edgar	X	X	X
Sedasev, Igor	-	X	-
Siimann, Mart	-	X	X
Sinijärv, Riivo	X	-	-
Sinissaar, Tiit	X	X	X
Sirendi, Arvo	X	X	X
Spriit, Edgar	X	-	-
Stalnuhhin, Mihhail	-	-	X
Strukov, Valentin	-	X	-
<i>Sügis, Aime</i>	X	-	-
Tärno, Ülo	-	-	X
Taimla, Andres	-	X	X

NAME	1. LP 1992-95	2. LP 1995-1999	3. LP 1999-2003
Tamm, Eino	-	X	-
Tamm, Jüri	-	-	X
Tammsaar, Tiit	-	-	X
Tarand, Andres	X	X	X
Tarto, Enn	X	X	X
<i>Tarvis, Laine</i>	-	-	X
Teiter, Kirill	X	-	-
Telgmaa, Juhan	-	X	-
Tepandi, Tonu	X	-	-
Tomberg, Jevgeni	-	-	X
<i>Tonisson, Liina</i>	X	X	X
Toomepuu, Jüri	X	-	-
Toomet, Olev	-	X	-
Toomik, Olli	X	-	-
Toomsalu, Tiit	-	-	X
Tootsen, Toivo	-	-	X
Tootsen, Ülo	-	-	X
<i>Treial, Mai</i>	-	X	X
Truu, Elmar	-	X	X
Üksvärav, Raoul	X	X	-
Uluots, Ülo	-	X	-
Ummelas, Mart	-	X	-
Undusk, Feliks	-	X	-
Uustalo, Toivo	X	-	-
Vähi, Tiit	-	X	-
Vahtre, Lauri	X	X	X
Valton (Vallikivi), Arvo	X	-	-
Varek, Toomas	-	-	X
Varik, Andres	-	X	X
<i>Veidemann, Andra</i>	X	X	-
Veidemann, Rein	X	-	-
Velliste, Trivimi	X	-	X
Velman, Vladimir	-	-	X
Vilosius, Toomas	-	X	X
Vitsur, Heido	X	-	-
Voog, Rein	-	-	X
Vooglaid, Ülo	X	X	-
<i>Vossotskaja, Valentina</i>	-	-	X
<b>total</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>101</b>

Names printed in italics are female MPs.

Source: Members of Parliament 1992: [http://www.vvk.ee/r92/vtl\\_liikmed.stm](http://www.vvk.ee/r92/vtl_liikmed.stm), 07.05.2002  
1995: [http://www.vvk.ee/r95/vtl\\_liikmed.stm](http://www.vvk.ee/r95/vtl_liikmed.stm), 07.05.2002  
1999: [http://www.vvk.ee/r99/vtl\\_liikmed.stm](http://www.vvk.ee/r99/vtl_liikmed.stm), 07.05.2002

PORTFOLIO  NAME OF MINISTER	Prime Minister	Agriculture	Culture	Defence	Economics	Education	Environment	European Integration	Finance	Foreign Affairs	Interior	Justice	Population/Minority	Regional Affairs	Social Affairs	Traffic/Communication	without portfolio	Sum of ministerial posts
	Aaviksoo, Jaak						4											
Adams, Jüri											2							1
Allik, Jaak			3 4 5 6															4
Arike, Heiki										1								1
Aro, Tiit														5 6				2
Aru, Peep													6					1
Arumäe, Urmas											1							1
Asmer, Toivo													7			8		2
Efendijev, Eldar																8		1
Jürgenson, Toivo					1 2										7			3
Hänni, Liia <sup>18</sup>																	1 2	2
Hansen, Vootele							2											1
Ilves, Toomas Hendrik										5 6 7								3
Kallas, Siim	8								7	4								3
Kallo, Kalev																3		1
Kama, Kaido											2	1						2
Kannik, Indrek				1														1
Kivi, Signe			7 8															2
Klaassen, Mait						6												1
Kranich, Heiki							7 8		1									3
Kreitzberg, Peeter						3												1
Kubri, Tiit														4 5				2
Kukk, Kalev																4		1
Laar, Mart	1 7																	2
Lauristin, Marju															1			1
Leemets, Ants														3				1
Leimann, Jaak					5 6													2

<sup>18</sup> As minister for reforms in the cabinet of Laar I und Tarand.

PORTFOLIO  NAME OF MINISTER	Prime Minister	Agriculture	Culture	Defence	Economics	Education	Environment	European Integration	Finance	Foreign Affairs	Interior	Justice	Population/Minority	Regional Affairs	Social Affairs	Traffic/Communication	without portfolio	Sum of ministerial posts
	Lepikson, Robert										6							
Leetsaar, Jaan		1																1
Lipstock, Andres					4				1 2									3
Lippmaa, Endel								3										1
Loik, Rein						5												1
Luik, Jüri				1 7						1 2							1	5
Lukas, Tonis						7												1
Mälk, Raul										6								1
Mändmets, Ilmar		3 4 5																3
Marrandi, Jaanus		8																1
Meister, Andi																1 2		2
Mikser, Sven				8														1
Mois, Jüri											7							1
Nestor, Eiki														7		2		2
Niitenberg, Arvo <sup>19</sup>																1 2		2
<i>Ojuland, Kristiina</i>										8								1
Olesk, Peeter			1 2			1 2											1	5
Opmann, Mart									3 4 5 6									4
Ounapuu, Harri									8									1
Öövel, Andrus				3 4 5 6														4
<i>Oviir, Siiri</i>														3 8				2
Padar, Ivari		7																1
Pärnoja, Mihkel					7													1
<i>Parek, Lagle</i>										1								1
<i>Rand, Mailis</i>						8												1

<sup>19</sup> As minister for energy in the cabinet of PM Laar I.

PORTFOLIO  NAME OF MINISTER	Prime Minister	Agriculture	Culture	Defence	Economics	Education	Environment	European Integration	Finance	Foreign Affairs	Interior	Justice	Population/Minority	Regional Affairs	Social Affairs	Traffic/Communication	without portfolio	<i>Sum of ministerial posts</i>
	Rask, Märt											4	7 8					
Rebas, Hain				1														1
Reiljan, Villu							3 4 5 6											4
Rummo, Paul-Eerik			1			1												2
Saarmann, Ain					1													1
Saks, Katrin													7					1
Savisaar, Edgar											3							1
Seppik, Ain											8							1
Siimann, Mart	6																	1
Sildmäe, Toomas					1													1
Sinijärv, Riivo										3	5 6						4	4
Taal, Olari											6							1
Tamm, Aldo		2																1
Tarand, Andres	2						1											2
<i>Tonisson, Liina</i>					3 8											8		3
Tupp, Enn				1 2														2
Üürike, Madis									1									1
Vähi, Tiit	3 4 5																	3
Vare, Raivo																5 6		2
Varik, Andres		6																1
Varul, Paul												3 4 5 6						4
<i>Veidemann, Andra</i>								5					6					2
Velliste, Trivimi										1								1
Vilosius, Toomas															1 2 4			3

Names printed in italics are female ministers.



## **Hinweis**

Bisher sind in der Reihe Forschungspapiere „Probleme der Öffentlichen Verwaltung in Mittel- und Osteuropa“ des Lehrstuhls für Politikwissenschaft, Verwaltung und Organisation an der Universität Potsdam erschienen:

### **Heft 1 (2004)**

Stefanie Tragl: Landwirtschaftsverwaltung in Polen. Verzögerte Reformen in einem instabilen politischen Umfeld

### **Heft 2 (2005)**

Stefanie Tragl: The Development of Polish Telecommunications Administration (1989-2003)



**ISSN 1860-028X**  
**ISBN 3-937786-52-X**