

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.)

 *Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)*

PROJECT	
Participant:	[101081520] - [Avatud Eesti Fond] ([OEF])
PIC number:	887710245
Project name and acronym:	COVIDemocracy in the Baltics _ COVIDemocracy

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	WP9-D9.1
Event name:	National event in Estonia
Type:	Discussion
In situ/online:	<i>In-situ</i>
Location:	Paide, Estonia
Date(s):	August 12, 2023
Website(s) (if any):	https://oef.org.ee/paevakajaline/artikkel/aef-kutsus-12-augustil-paides-osalema-arutelu-does-voting-still-matter https://oef.org.ee/paevakajaline/galerii/arvamusfestival-2023-aefi-arutelu-does-voting-still-matter https://oef.org.ee/teoksil/covidemocracy-in-the-baltics/aefi-arutelu-does-voting-still-matter
Participants	
Female:	55
Male:	25
Non-binary:	
From country 1 [Estonia]:	64
From country 2 [UK]:	2
From country 3 [Belarus]:	1
From country 4 [Australia]:	1
From country 5 [Poland]:	5

From country 6 [Czech Republic]:	2		
From country 7 [Romania]:	2		
From country 8 [Croatia]:	2		
From country 8 [Hungary]:	1		
Total number of participants:	80	From total number of countries:	9

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

Discussion "Does Voting Still Matter" took place on August 12, at 2-3:30 PM at Arvamusfestival (Estonian democracy festival) in Paide. The discussion took place in English and attracted around 80 people from at least 9 different countries. Around 10 000 people visited the festival and during two days, around 150 discussions in various formats took place.

Description of the topic and discussion "Does Voting Still Matter?"

Elections are the central institution of democratic representative governments. But at the same time, we live in a paradoxical era: in a situation where democracy is on the decline worldwide, elections are held almost everywhere in the world. Do elections even matter anymore?

At the discussion, we discussed with experts and the audience how can we - citizens - be heard more and ask if it still matters to go voting, when the outcomes often leave us disillusioned? Why do many people not vote at all? We explored the significance and trends of voting by examining case studies from Estonia, Hungary and Turkey. These countries were chosen due to the fact that Estonia's general elections took place in March 2023, in Turkey spring 2023 and elections in Hungary took place in 2022, and was a good example why voting matters.

The panelists of the discussion were the following experts:

- Mari-Liis Jakobson, Political Scientist, Tallinn University, Estonia;
- Peeter Raudsik, Expert on the Middle-East, Estonia
- Róbert Laszló, Election Expert, Political Capital Institute, Hungary.

The moderator of the discussion was Bart Cosijn, moderator coach and professional moderator.

During the discussion, the audience was actively engaged to have a say and express their opinion. As the discussion was held in English, it attracted many foreigners, because most of the discussions at the festival were held in Estonian (from 150 discussions 12 were held in English). Due to the engaging format of the discussion, it was also possible to determine where the audience was from: Estonia, UK, Belarus, Australia. Additionally, the audience was comprised by civic activists from Romania, Poland, Czech Republic and Croatia, as guests of the Open Estonia Foundation. Potentially, there might have been more countries represented in the audience.

Media coverage

The event was livestreamed on the festival's web page as well as the Estonian Public Broadcasting's English language website.

One week before the event, an op-ed "Does Voting Still Matter?" (Kas valimised loevad) by one of the panelists, political scientist Mari-Liis Jakobson, was published in one of Estonia's biggest daily Eesti Päevaleht.

The biggest Estonian daily, Postimees, published a summary of the discussion.

The video of the discussion is available at the festival's Youtube channel. The podcast of the discussion will be released in September 2023.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).