

# OPEN ESTONIA FOUNDATION IN 2001–2006



Avatud Eesti Fond  
Open Estonia Foundation



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PEETER LANGOVITS  
GOOD DEED FOUNDATION ARCHIVES  
ESTONIAN DEBATING SOCIETY ARCHIVES



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## DEAR READERS,

This yearbook reflects the activities of the Open Estonia Foundation in 2001–2006. We did not wish to compile a dry report; so on the subsequent pages, we will introduce the undertakings in which the OEF with its partners has participated and examine how broader social developments have been shaped by them. Here we give the floor to our good cooperation partners and colleagues, to whom we give great thanks for their personal texts and photos, which help to highlight the versatility of the foundation's activities.

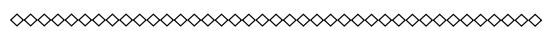
In her article, Iris Pettai, one of the authors in this compendium, asks what the formula for the OEF's success is, and as an answer, highlights the directing of public attention to significant problems, the destruction of myths, thorough research before action and the creation of think tanks where experts recommend solutions.

Truly, the destruction of myths is one of the central principles of our work. Historian David Vseviov has called myths "dark glasses", because they blur reality and result in the suppression of problems. Often the key to a successful initiative is clarification that something very good and something very bad can exist side by side—family violence can also occur in respectable families, HIV also spreads among successful Tallinners, women with higher education can also be paid lower salaries than men—because the course of events is not changed very much by single projects, but by changing people's attitudes.

What will the next few years be like? With the achievement of a sense of economic security, increasing numbers of people find the

time and desire to deal with community affairs and to participate as citizens in the shaping of the cityscape, in clarifying the deeper meaning of social problems and aspiring toward greater transparency in the state governance. We know how to value and analyze our experiences from the recent transition period, but we have also learned lessons that allow us to advise Georgia and Moldova on economic issues, and Mongolia on the promotion of e-democracy. The Open Estonia Foundation is continuing to support people's initiatives in these directions with programs that emphasize three different spheres: open governance, social integration, and the integration of Europe.

The walls of the Open Estonia Foundation's library are hung with letters of thanks sent to us by NGOs, schools, village elders, and youth organizations. For its part, the Open Estonia Foundation thanks everyone—the good associations and volunteers—with whom we have cooperated through the years. Your deeds are contributing to Estonia's development.



**MALL HELLAM,**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
OF THE OPEN ESTONIA FOUNDATION



## DEAR READERS,



**ANDRES KASEKAMP,**  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD  
OF THE OPEN ESTONIA FOUNDATION

The year 2001 was a decisive for the Open Estonia Foundation. For ten years, the foundation had primarily distributed project supports and scholarships for studies or creative work; however, the wish of the Open Society Institute and financier George Soros was to deal increasingly with social and political analysis. Many of the initiatives to date had become governmental programs. Thus, new goals were set and work continues with three principal programs: European integration, good governance, and equality. The Praxis think tank was started up as an analysis center.

In 2001, Europe as viewed from Estonia was no longer behind the Iron Curtain, but the operation and objectives of the European Union needed explaining. In its work the OEF concentrated on making the voice of our country's people heard as well as possible in Europe's decision-making processes. During the last six years Estonia has changed a great deal—now we feel we are full-fledged members of the European Union.

The OEF has always supported a societal model in which the government is responsible to the people, makes honest and fair decisions in shaping the economic environment, and guarantees the protection of people's fundamental rights. In the 1990s, the Foundation was an important pioneer in areas where the state had not yet arrived. Undoubtedly one of the most important was the development of a civil society and the third sector. The goal of the Baltic-American Partnership Program that operates with the Open Estonia Foundation is the support of civil initiatives and associations and the promotion of civic education.

Now we can evaluate how well the Open Estonia Foundation has gone along with the constant changes in Estonian society. On these pages we bring you the stories of those with whom we have shared values or those who have strode together with the Open Estonia Foundation and its activities.



# ESTONIA

LENNY BENARDO, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE – NEW YORK

For Estonia, the past five years have been transformative. As a result, for the Open Estonia Foundation (OEF), they have been challenging. As we look back over the past five years of OEF, we nevertheless see a strong record of innovative, results-based work in fostering an open society.

In 2001, 53% of Estonians were opposed to EU membership. The EU was seen as a vast and complicated bureaucracy where the average citizen had little influence. Many Estonians feared EU integration would affect their economic plight adversely. European citizens' associations did not generally extend to Estonia which, coupled with the weak policy analysis from the third sector and the media, resulted in a paucity of information about the benefits of EU membership.

OEF has been at the forefront of the movement to transform Estonia from a Euro-skeptic to a Euro-positive society. Over the past five years, OEF has supported hundreds of organizations at the grassroots level which have sought to improve the debate over European integration. Initially, OEF supported initiatives that illuminated the "real-life" differences that would occur with accession. Rather than presenting only the objective political and economic

benefits of enlargement, OEF took care to formulate these initiatives as interactive discussions where citizens' fears could be adequately addressed. As Estonians warmed to the EU, and accession transformed from a debate into reality, OEF began to support projects that examined the EU's relations to its new neighbor states and discussed aspects of European citizenship.

In addition to cultivating discussion at the grassroots level, Estonia has been a central hub and repository for strategic thinking regarding European integration. OEF has supported analysis, policy and discussion papers about how to increase citizen involvement in the accession process and advocated for improved access to EU institutions. On OEF's initiative, Estonian NGO's established relations with the Committee on European Affairs in the parliament where legislators were adequately briefed on the concerns of civil society and its citizen constituencies. OEF worked to strengthen the relationship between Brussels-based and Estonian NGO's and NGO networks. OEF also supported nationwide training courses for NGO's on EU funding schemes.

By drawing upon regional NGO's to implement its European integration (and other)



programming, OEF has also contributed substantially to the development of civil society in Estonia. OEF has also worked to inculcate key roles of civil society in its grantees: policy advice; capacity development of institutions and individuals; advocacy, communication and access to public information; and knowledge-networking and sharing of good practices. More recently, OEF's coordination with the Baltic-American Partnership Program (BAPP) in Estonia has allowed OEF's activities to narrow from broad support to the third sector to more intense activity in specific areas.

Among post-Soviet states, Estonia has been prodigious in approving positive economic and political reform. OEF has complemented these achievements by helping to institutionalize this expansive momentum. OEF has given support to organizations to modernize public administration and strengthen the judiciary. In cooperation with Transparency International and Praxis, OEF undertook monitoring, research and advocacy efforts related to the reduction of corruption and bureaucracy. It also oversaw the formation of a coalition of human rights NGO's and contributed to the development of information sector strategies and policy regarding e-governance and media.

*While not perfect, Estonia now has one of the strongest political and economic cultures of the new EU states.*

Since Estonia joined the EU in 2004, it has begun communicating its European integration lessons to a "Wider Europe". As part of the East-East program at OSI, OEF strengthened relations between organizations in Georgia and Estonia. OEF has sponsored the participation of Ukrainian students, lawyers and civil society professionals in a variety of development-related activities. OEF is also working increasingly with Belarus, where it seeks to improve the capacity and influence of Belarusian civil society.

Finally, OEF has been instrumental in helping to advance more inclusive and effective forms of governance for every type of citizen. A focus area has been gender equality, with OEF promoting equal rights, particularly pay and social protections; opportunities and political involvement for women. OEF has also sought to raise awareness about violence against women, and with the Social Rehabilitation Center of Tallinn established the country's first women's shelters. Under the auspices of OSI's Network Public Health Program, OEF conducted HIV-prevention campaigns among sex workers and young drug addicts, the two demographics most at-risk for HIV/AIDS in Estonia.

As Estonia continues to progress, the country and OEF will increasingly be seen as models for the democratic development of transitional states.

# HOW TO SOLVE SOCIAL PROBLEMS?

**IRIS PETTAI.**

HEAD OF THE SOCIAL RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF THE ESTONIAN OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE

The Open Estonian Foundation has often managed to surprise me with its bold, and sometimes risky project ideas, as well as with the extent to which the Foundation has been able to change our thinking, and even more—life throughout Estonia.

There are many foundations and other organizations funding projects in Estonia. I consider the OEF to be the undisputed leader among them. Why? What is the formula for its success? I will try to analyze this based on the example of family violence.

Five years ago, family violence was a taboo subject in Estonia.

At best, it was considered to be harmless domestic quarrelling in which bystanders should not interfere.

However, the attitude has totally changed.

Family violence is seen as a dangerous problem that can end in injury or even death. For the Estonian police, and also the victim aid system, family violence has become a priority

issue, which is now being dealt with seriously. Two shelters have been established for victims—in Tartu and Tallinn—and support groups for victims operate in almost all Estonian regions. Family violence is constantly under public scrutiny—not a week goes by that some media channel does not treat some aspect of the topic.

The breakthrough took place in only five years, which is an extremely short time for social development. The OEF, which has financed projects to combat family violence, and which has also been a principal promoter of bringing this topic to the attention of the public, has played an important role.

What has been the key to success?

# KEY TO SUCCESS NO. 1: OPEN FIRE ON THE MYTHS!

Hidden problems cannot be brought to the attention of the public if the myths surround-

ing them cannot be refuted. Family violence in Estonia has also been hidden in the shadow of many myths and preconceptions. One of the most complicated notions, and one most in need of being refuted, for instance was that family violence occurs seldom, and only a few alcoholics beat or violently mistreat their wives. The Estonian public was deeply shocked by the destruction of the myth of the home as a castle that offers security when it became clear that it was in the family and in the home where women were most threatened by violence.

Interpreting the myths was one of the points of departure for the OEF projects to combat family violence. This meant that initially, project writers had to clarify the myths for themselves, overturn them before the public and then continue with the topic.

## KEY TO SUCCESS NO. 2: THOROUGH RESEARCH BEFORE ACTION!

Six studies have been made about family violence: three among the population (in 2001, 2003 and 2004) and three among specialists—police (2002), doctors (2003) and social workers (2004). Four were financed by the OEF, which is unique, because a center financing projects seldom attaches such importance to research. The studies helped to explain the regularity of family violence and also enabled a search for new solutions to prevent it and help the victims. Based on the studies, books, training materials, and articles have been written, and hundreds of specialists trained. To a great extent, it is the studies that have clarified how widespread family violence actually is in Estonia and how seriously it threatens the health of women.

## KEY TO SUCCESS NO. 3: LAUNCH A PUBLIC DEBATE!

One of the principles of the OEF is that all applicants for project support must be able to launch a public debate about their subject. The media quickly tackled the topic of family violence, without which a breakthrough in public opinion would not have been possible.

## KEY TO SUCCESS NO. 4: DON'T LET THE TOPIC COOL DOWN!

It is not easy to keep any topic at the forefront for years and fresh in the minds of the public, since many topics and organizations aspire to the same kind of attention concurrently. Despite that, family violence has continued to be at the center of media attention. There are many reasons for this, two of which I will mention. Firstly, the public must be constantly fed new information. New information about family violence has been received from studies conducted at different times, and frequently the new facts have succeeded in seriously shocking the public.

Secondly, as already mentioned, the topic of family violence has required a thorough reevaluation of some earlier understandings. This in turn has created fiery counterarguments. Thus, in Estonia, a strong group of opponents (including university professors) has developed for family

violence, which, has helped to keep the topic at the forefront and to arouse curiosity with its constant criticism.

## KEY TO SUCCESS NO. 5: CREATE THINK TANKS!

Complicated social problems necessitate the joint mental efforts of specialists from various fields. The family violence issue has succeeded in creating think tanks that have brought together people whom it would be difficult to convene around a table otherwise. For instance, a think tank, which convened in 2005, and included police officers, social workers, sociologists, psychologists, and teachers of crim-

inology, was able to make a breakthrough and motivate the Lääne County Police Prefecture to start registering all the cases of family violence in the county on their own initiative. The study provided valuable information on how family violence occurs, what help the victims need and how the police should act in various situations, etc.

*I hope that someone will analyze in more detail the formula for the OEF's success, and will systematically analyze the principles and ideology of the foundation's activities. The result could produce study material that would not only help foundations similar to the OEF, but would also help all of us act more powerfully and be socially more responsible.*

## WHAT HAS ESTONIA UNDERTAKEN TO HELP VICTIMS?

- » The first women's shelter was opened in Tartu in November 2002. Women who were victims were given temporary shelter, medical aid, and they were advised and informed about services that are provided by various agencies. Already in 2003, 1,858 nights were spent in the shelter (by 42 women and 21 children). In 2005, a women's shelter was opened in Tallinn, in addition, to the mothers' and children's shelters that are operating.
- » In the fall of 2003, the first support group for women suffering from violence started operations in Tallinn. In 2004, such support groups were started in 10 towns. The Tallinn crisis center "Lifeline" and the county family and crisis centers deal with counseling for family violence and sexual abuse victims, also by telephone.
- » Since 2004, family violence has been declared a priority by the Estonian Police. Since 2005, 35 victim assistance workers are employed by the Estonian Police, whose priorities include the assistance of family violence victims.
- » In 2004, with the support of the OEF, the Lääne County Police Prefecture initiated a project entitled "Professional Police against Family Violence". In the course of the project, a new method for collecting police statistics was worked out. An appropriate police statistics system and instructions for resolving family violence cases were implemented. Cooperation is also being developed with local social and medical workers.

## CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE ON WOMEN'S HEALTH

### 8. Drug dependence

- » 84% of the victims have used a drug during the last month.
- » Every other victim uses painkillers.

### 1. Severe injuries

- » 41,000 women are injured every year.
- » 7,000 of them receive severe injuries (broken bones, stabbing and cutting wounds, etc.).

### 2. Deterioration of reproductive health

- » 4,000 women received injuries of the reproductive organs.
- » 2,000 women had miscarriages.

### 7. Chronic health disorders

- »  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the victims suffer from chronic health disorders.
- » 87% complain of constant stress.

### 3. Long recuperation period

- » Recuperation of the victims required a total of 433,000 days or 1,186 years.

### 6. Working while sick

- » 36% of the victims went to work (school) while sick.

### 5. Missing work

- » 54% of the victims missed work (school) due to illness, for a total of 206,000 days.

### 4. Hospital treatment

- » 10% of the victims received hospital treatment for severe injuries, for a total of 26,000 days.

# CALL YOUR MOTHER!

## ILMAR RAAG,

ETV PROGRAM DIRECTOR 2001–2002, ETV CHAIRMAN 2002–2005,  
MEMBER OF THE SUPERVISORY BOARD OF THE OPEN ESTONIA FOUNDATION SINCE 2005

It all started when Raul Rebane came up with his brilliant idea. It was spring 2004 and Estonian Television thought it was time to update its identification graphics. During this period it was important for ETV to constantly surprise its viewers while simultaneously conducting a search for a face for public television. In our discussions at ETV at that time, we had reached the conclusion that we would promote program hosts that were not just telegenic performers, but personalities. The strategic direction was to differ from the other TV channels, which also meant shaping the channel's own character. According to the concept of the time, ETV was not just to reflect society, but to express its position. Since we are all citizens striving for a better society, ETV's mission was to promote Estonian values.

Then, Raul Rebane called me and said enthusiastically—which is his constant attitude—that he had had a very interesting conversation at the Open Estonia Foundation. My initial reaction was a bit defensive—as a precaution—, because people with all sorts of ideas are constantly trying to wend their way into television; and various interest groups have very different messages. Yet, this call came at just the right moment, because ETV did not have any good ideas for its identification graphics.

What are identification graphics in television? These are short video clips between pro-

grams that remind the viewers what channel they are watching. On private channels, these clips often fulfill a legal function—to distinguish commercials from other programs. Since these clips are repeated rather frequently, they must be as attractive as possible and must not annoy the viewers. Often, the first impression of a TV channel is created by these clips.

*Then, came an unexpected idea—as good ideas often are—that these clips could include simple and good appeals, for instance “Call your mother”.*

What can one compare this idea with? First of all, what springs to mind is the *United Colors of Benetton* ads that were famous once—even becoming works of art with a social content in their own right. Do you still remember the pictures of the kissing nun or of the newborn with the umbilical cord still attached? They had no direct connection to the colorful garments that *United Colors of Benetton* sold. However, they killed two birds with one stone—on the one hand, a work of art was created that caused strong emotions, while on the other hand, an intellectual and slightly provocative image was created for the brand.

Right from the start something developed that is typical of good ideas. Namely, the OEF suggested developing the idea further—after



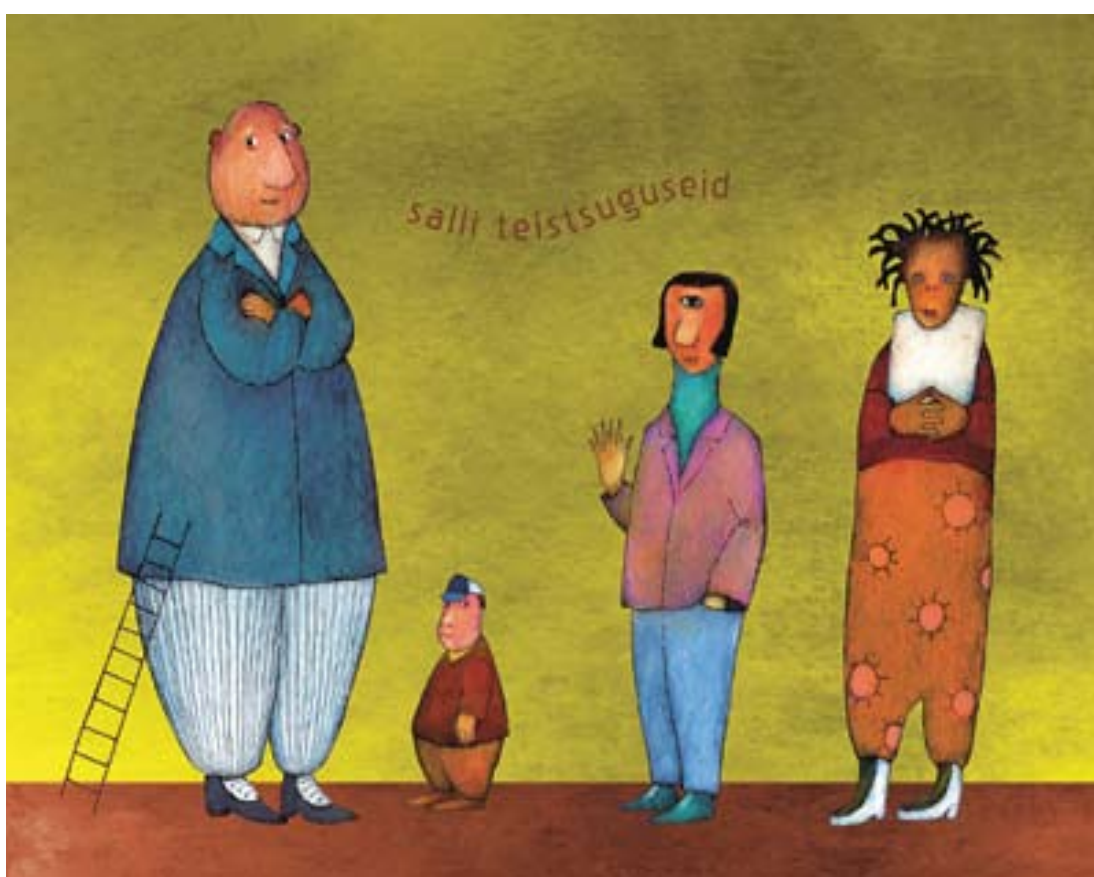
the “TV campaign” the same messages would be brought onto the street as social advertisements. Before anyone realized what was happening, ideas had developed for calendars, shirts, screensavers, etc. This was all completed in the summer of 2004. Urmas Mildberg did the artwork while Rene Vilbre, ETV’s principal director, directed the clips. Of course, the calendars, which later won the special graphics award from the Estonian Association of Advertising Agencies, were produced for 2005.

The messages were:

*“Smile”, “Better Give Blood”,  
“Let’s Warm Our Hearts”, “Caress  
a Child”, “Say Hello to a Neighbor”.*

For ETV, the project was immediately well received by viewers, which is not at all typical. Usually, many start to grumble as soon as ETV makes any changes in its design. However, the ideological event was of greater importance. ETV, Baltic-American Partnership Program and the OEF carried out this project as true partners—sharing common goals. It then became clear, for the first time, that if ETV is no longer a state television as far as its programming content is concerned, but an independent television channel, ETV should not resemble a commercial television, since the ideal ETV is part of civil society. Not serving politicians and advertisers actually meant being a spokesperson for the citizenry. Thus, we can say that the OEF accomplished something splendid.

A SAMPLE PICTURE FROM THE CAMPAIGN



# THE PATH OF SUBBOTEJA

**MIKHAIL VLADISLAVLEV**, TV REPORTER, HOST OF THE SUBBOTEJA PROGRAM

How time flies! Sometimes it seems it was only yesterday, but actually we are entering the twelfth season with our show, Subboteja, and apparently, this will guarantee our entry into the Guinness Book of Estonian Records (if this should ever be compiled), because only the news program Aktuaalne Kaamera has been shining in the domestic broadcast heavens longer than we have. Currently, it is hard to imagine how we traveled from one editorial office to another, from one television head to another, trying to explain that it was abnormal to have two broadcast media existing in one country, and it was actually possible to schedule a program that would be watched by both Estonians and Russians. However, our tele-moguls felt that as soon as Estonians heard Russian spoken on the screen, they would grab their axes and smash their televisions. And Russians, well, their hands are already accustomed to axes... Of course, this is an exaggeration, but at that time, the situation was explained approximately in these terms. Moreover, no matter how much we repeated that we had hated children's programs since childhood, because we could not understand why some people were shown all sorts of interesting things, and others were only shown stupid cartoons, pigs and lambs. Since early childhood, we felt that discrimination based on any characteristics is unfair (in that case, discrimination based on age). Unfortunately, our examples of bunnies and squirrels convinced no one.

However, there had to be someone who believed in this, although this person would have to be brave and unusual. And we found such a person—Toomas Lepp, the most temperamental figure at TV3. Lepp is clearly a very complicated person, multi-faceted and contradictory. This explosive personality has apparently a mixture of Estonian and Spanish blood. In any case, our proposal started Lepp's blood boiling, and to our great surprise, only a few months after our conversation with Lepp, we were on the air at TV3. Actually, not us, but a cat...

From the start we had searched for that uncommon spot where Estonians and Russians could do something together, and then we thought that cats have no nationality nor does the love for these four-legged friends. Vurruline Murri, who was on the air in our first program, became the symbol of possible common ground.

From there on, as things proceeded more smoothly, we even aroused interest in the viewers and they started to watch us. At the same time, we understood that we had the status of the unendowed, who have nothing and who are dependent upon the first person they run into. We needed things! Those who have come in contact with television even



REPORTERS **MIHHAIL VLADISLAVLEV** AND **ALEKSANDER ZUKERMAN** AT MONTAGE ROOM

once know that you need a camera for your show—in a way, it's a matter of prestige, but also a question of opportunities. However, it is primarily a question of creative freedom. Every time you want to execute an idea you don't have to wheedle a camera from someone. Thus, we were actually not faced with a technical problem but more a problem of creativity and creative freedom. With this same question on our lips, we knocked on the door of the freest institution at that time—the Open Estonia Foundation.

If we were not seriously constrained by space, a lyrical chapter would now follow about the spirit of freedom and joy that ruled this foundation at that time; about the spirit of the people who had assembled there, and the spirit of the people who worked there. We would write about how the nice lady, Küllike Tohver, told us that it was possible to help with the camera; about how Mall Hellam made our worry into a heartfelt matter for herself; and finally of how we received our sacred dream, and paid the mystical amount of 1 kroon per year for its rent. With regard to our subsequent projects, our approaches, and the many foundation programs we participated in, we can say that without the Open Estonia Foundation

Subboteja would not exist nor would many other things.

A new project was born at the beginning of the new century. We came to the conclusion that there was a danger that our program was becoming a sort of travelogue—we traveled too much in Western countries, forgetting that parts of Europe were post-Communist. Again, we knocked on the door of the foundation, this time with the program *East to East* in mind, which we at least considered the best Open Estonia Foundation program to date. The broadcasts from Kazakhstan, which we made with the foundation's support, as well as the broadcasts from Romania and Albania, Ukraine and Russia, created great feedback and garnered all kinds of commentary, which in the main was positive. For instance, the program from Kazakhstan gave our journalists (not only the ones at Subboteja) the opportunity to see the actual problems in a country where wealth and poverty exist side by side; where officials avoid direct responsibility; and where oil has become the source of joy as well as the greatest ecological problem for the country. No less important was the return visit of our Kazakh colleagues, who saw a censor-free country without a "Ministry of

Truth", where the level of corruption is minimal, and where political and financial decisions are rather transparent. They were surprised by the fact that the Estonians did not hide anything from them—not their economic achievements, their problems in Northeast-Estonia, nor the queues at the Estonian-Russian border. They were struck by how easily we were able to meet with officials and the fact that our bureaucrats did not try to avoid unpleasant questions. The president, prime minister, mayor of Tallinn, and of course, the leader of the Open Estonia Foundation—this is far from a complete list of those with whom we organized meetings. This all, including our computer proficiency and banking development, was totally crazy for our visitors. However, the greatest surprise for them was the level of openness in the society, which is still unattainable in Kazakhstan. One can say without hesitation that this project corresponded completely to the foundation's ideals.

Now it is hard to recall whether we completed all these projects within the given deadlines, because, as the Russian genius Gribojedov has said, "Those who are happy do not look at the clock". Looking back, we see the cooperation with the Open Estonia Foun-

dation as a period of endless joy. However, life went on and gave rise to many events, including the April-May drama of 2007. In those days, it seemed to me that despite the importance of the third sector and all the invaluable work done in this field by the OEF, there was a great lack of those "old" programs, which have made Estonia into this open society. Perhaps it seemed at some moment that all the problems had already been solved, and the giddiness resulting from success overshadowed the actual situation. Moreover, why should Soros finance programs that the government should deal with? Of course, all this is correct, but... In short—the third sector also has an important function. Maybe the spring dramas would not have occurred if the third sector had been stronger and more authoritative because then the voice of judiciously thinking people, not only the voice of those who shout the loudest, would also have been heard. We believe it is appropriate to wish the foundation success.

At the end of a paper, it is customary to make some critical remarks. But what can we do if we have none to make about the work of the Open Estonia Foundation, and one of our dearest awards is the foundation's Concord award for mutual understanding?...



# THE OPEN ESTONIA FOUNDATION AND HIV/AIDS PREVENTION IN ESTONIA

**NELLI KALIKOVA**, DIRECTOR OF THE AIDS PREVENTION CENTER

Genuine HIV prevention is an activity which does not follow in the footsteps of a spreading HIV infection. It must be ahead of the times, be based on competent projections, the experiences of other countries, and the values of civil society, which involve openness, tolerance, and human rights.

An authoritarian society does not change into a civil society overnight; this is a long and difficult process. Those involved in AIDS prevention have felt this personally. Although the current situation is considerably better than in the 1990s, it is still too soon to be totally satisfied, and the rate of HIV infection is a good indicator of the maturity of society.

The concept of a “lighthouse” in Socialist countries is unfortunately hackneyed, but there is no better word to characterize the role played by OEF in showing the way for the prevention of HIV in Estonia.

In the middle of the 1990s, the intoxication with freedom was accompanied by a “sexual revolution” and a wave of prostitution. Society heatedly argued whether to legalize or criminalize prostitution; the politicians were only interested in the state receiving its share of this profitable business. No one bothered to think about how to protect the young women—of

ten pre-teens—who were involved in this process, from infection or other risks. There was no talk of state financing.

The Open Estonia Foundation came to our aid, helping to finance the first projects, with which to counsel, study, treat, and teach women safe behavior. This rescue was not easily accomplished, because the supervisory board of the OEF was also comprised of Estonian people from our immature society. However, they had a more open view of the world, more tolerant attitude toward the weaker members of society, and an understanding of the dangers and consequences of an HIV epidemic. Later, other foundations and financiers also reached out a helping hand.

In the second half of the 1990s, Estonia was able to taste other bitter fruits of freedom. The transit of narcotics through Estonia was accompanied by the sudden increase in opiate users. In the world, the so-called "damage-control" method had already been instituted several decades earlier. This included the exchange of syringes that allowed for the reduction of HIV and other infections that are spread through the blood, such as B- and C-hepatitis, among addicts, and methadone treatment, which provides addicts with an opportunity to terminate the use of illegal narcotics, to restore their mental and physical health, rejoin



society, and put an end to criminal activity. At that time, the society and even many specialists were not ready to understand and accept the “damage-control” method. Just as with prostitutes, the nonprofit AIDS Support Center was the initiator of assistance for drug addicts. The first steps turned out to be very difficult and even the support of the OEF did not succeed in breaking the ice of the social attitudes. At that time, based on international experience, the OEF was ready to initiate the reduction of the damage caused by narcotics and drug addiction and to finance methadone substitution treatment in 1998. However, even Estonia’s leading specialists were not ready for this and a good plan remained unfilled.

At that time, it was difficult to achieve an understanding in the society that one cannot ignore the problem, that our drug addicts are our children, who have fallen into the grip of a terrible vice, and every delayed day—with the arrival of the HIV epidemic—will later be very costly.

It was difficult to explain to people why counseling drug addicts and exchanging syringes was not equivalent to promoting drug addiction, but quite the opposite—it was useful to the society, and in the future, would save the people’s health and money. The most difficult thing to explain was why one should give drug addicts a narcotic substance, because methadone is by nature a narcotic.

Now much time has passed by. Currently, we not only have a drug addiction, but also a HIV, epidemic. However, the seriousness of the problem and necessity to solve it has now finally been recognized by everyone. In January 2003, the long-awaited methadone treatment program, financed by OEF, was launched, and was executed by the AIDS Support Center in Tallinn and Narva. As a positive sign of the times, the Tallinn City Government also financed the opening of a methadone treat-

ment center in Tallinn at Kopli 75. At the same time the state Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Prevention Program funded methadone substitution treatment in Narva.

Thereby, due to the active opposition of politicians and specialists, methadone substitution treatment reached Estonia with a five-year delay. However, this delay was not connected in any way to the OEF. Instead, the financing of projects before the HIV epidemic, which was unleashed at the end of 2000, is testimony to the foresight and long-term thinking of the OEF.

One of these projects included the program for the prevention of HIV among women dealing with prostitution and injecting narcotics. It enabled young women, who were in an especially perilous situation, to avoid HIV. This was a very far-sighted approach, because only now, six years later, is the society starting to understand that women are at greatest risk and after they are infected, an HIV epidemic can also be expected among newborns.

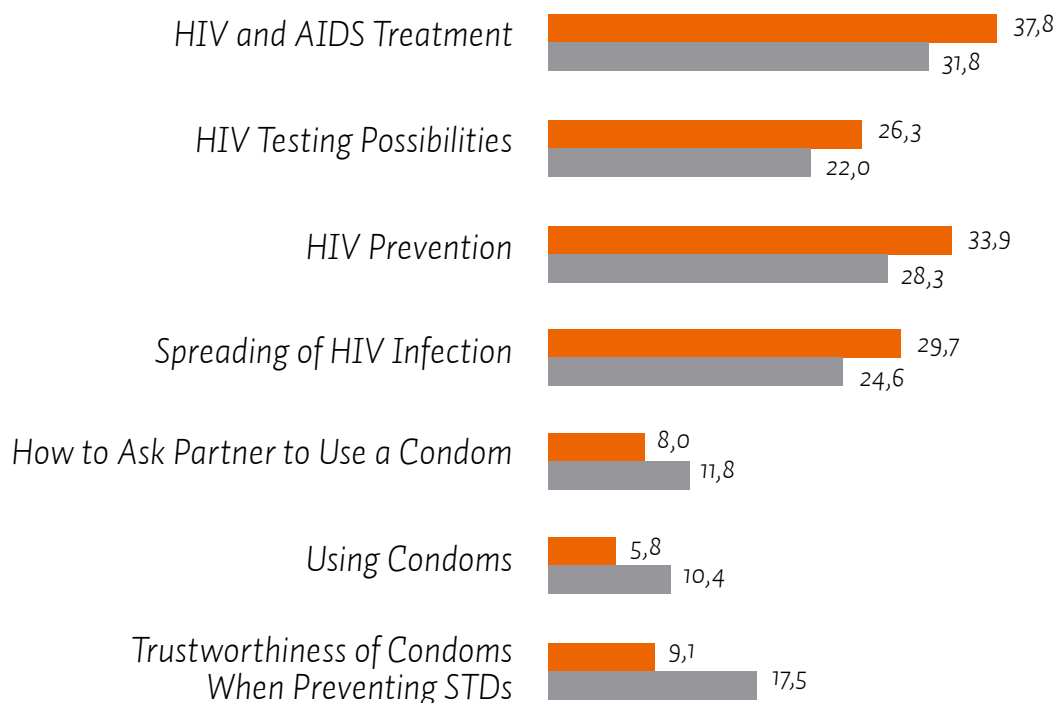
The second project was just as important, or maybe even more so, namely the prevention of HIV in prisons. Human memory is short and the prevention of HIV among prisoners, their counseling, voluntary testing, distribution of corresponding literature and even condoms, as well as the establishment of support groups for the HIV-positive, etc. now seems natural to everyone. Prison workers have completed numerous training courses, and both their attitude and that of the prisoners toward those that are HIV-positive is markedly more tolerant than years ago. But it has not always been so.

In 1999, the OEF made a proposal to launch a HIV prevention project in prisons. The enthusiastic, and unfortunately slightly naïve AIDS Support Center was ready to carry this out. However, we had never undertaken such a difficult assignment. Experienced prevention workers still recall their most difficult training

sessions, which were organized for the prison directors. No one had ever tried to voluntarily invade their domain, and their bewilderment, opposition, and prejudices were very great at the beginning. It took weeks and months before mutual trust and readiness to cooperate developed. Communication with the Ministry of Justice required the same serious work, because the first attitude was repellent to say the least. And here too, the OEF must be remembered positively. At the beginning of the project, the OEF offered to send a leading official of the Ministry of Justice to a conference in Hamburg entitled "HIV Prevention in Prisons". This seemed to be a useless waste of money

to us, because the officials would be opposed anyway! We would have preferred to send some doctor. Nevertheless, we acquiesced to the demands of the OEF and what a miracle—a reborn man returned, "Our Man in Havana", who was very helpful later in enlightening the leadership of the Ministry and the prisons.

Now, since we are members of the European Union, the majority of the foundations have terminated their work in Estonia, and the financed activities of the OEF are mostly a thing of the past. But the role of the OEF in showing the way continues to be important, since the goal of an open civil society has yet to be achieved.



The topics on which youngsters aged 14–18 would like to find more information.

Male ● Female ●

Study by Institute for Health Development, 2003

THE RIGHT GAZE,  
RIGHT WORK,  
AND RIGHT MEANING

**JAAK KILMI**, FILM DIRECTOR

Stereotypes in our consciousness are laudable subjects for a documentary filmmaker. People, whose world is comprised to a greater or lesser extent of a bundle of stereotypes, are interesting and curious—even funny, if you wish. They can also be the beloved. Sometimes they present their positions so forcefully that one is frightened. In any case, they have a clear goal in life, firm permanent values, and defined opponents.

Some friends have accused Andres Maimik and me of hypocrisy in our so-called women's films Big Sister and Beauty of the Fatherland—

saying that although we declare a wish to direct attention to gender stereotypes, we are actually intensifying them by the caricature-like depiction of our heroines.

It seemed as if, by showing a blond politician expressing immature positions or a female political party stalwart rattling off traditional gender platitudes, we were indicating that all women are harebrained.

THE FAMILY THAT THE MOVIE  
*AFTER ALL, I AM A WOMAN* PORTRAYS

Or it appeared that the march of the Home Daughters and their leader who shouts "Long Live!" to the permanent values of the patriarchal world are "actually" viewed from an arrogant male viewpoint.

Perhaps they are right, and we have hauled the money from the Open Estonia Foundation to the other side of the battle lines, and there, while giggling, are giving our own kind the green light. A Serbian girl, who saw our *Beauty of the Fatherland* in a laughter-filled hall at the Central European University in Budapest, re-



marked that had she seen this film on television, for instance, after the Independence Day parade, she would have thought that a horrible patriarchal dream. She suggested that the film should have been supplied with the competent commentary of a respected specialist, because a work that promotes gender equality should be circulated with a text that cannot be misinterpreted. Otherwise, people might misunderstand and think that women must be obedient to their men out of love and men should beat them once a week.

I gave my finger to the international equal rights movement when I accepted the money from the Open Estonia Foundation to make these two documentary films. I gave my hand, when I agreed to participate as an expert in selecting a collection of films promoting equal rights primarily in the former Soviet Republics. The title of the collection is "Gender Montage: Paradigms in Post-Soviet Space", and it was assembled at the beginning of 2006. Eleven countries participated in the international program including Estonia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Tadjikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Russia, and Mongolia.

Thus, in the spring of 2004, the Open Estonia Foundation and the Estonian Film Foundation announced an idea competition for documentary films dealing with social gender roles. We received seven ideas, which dealt with subjects such as modeling, women managers, male kindergarten teachers, motherhood and national population growth propaganda, as well as men's health problems and TV ads as the reproducer of gender stereotypes. Since the field—gender roles—is quite vague, the works, which were remarkable, were suc-

cessful due to precisely established purposes.

There were several sustainable ideas. With the support of the OEF, the film entitled *After All, I Am a Woman* went into production, which, based on the example of one family, describes the shaping of values through the transmission of the life experiences of mothers and grandmothers. The author, Kert Grünberg, phrased the goal of the film as follows: "Girls who have grown up without fathers, inherit the knowledge from their mothers that you cannot depend on men and have to manage by yourself. The film tracks the life of 25-year-old Airika, who is descended from a line of single mothers—which is why the young woman has decided to live without a man and become a single mother."

The question of population growth has become an important sore point in Estonia and motherhood is considered by many not to be a private matter but a civic duty. Perhaps, the institution of a mother's salary has brought more pregnant women onto the street, but over half of Estonian marriages still end in divorce and children are mostly left to the mothers to be brought up. In the family that the film talks about, the mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother have all brought their children up alone.

In the film, we do not see any equal rights researchers or other experts explaining diagrams or bar graphs that would tell us how to watch the film and what to learn from it. Yet, I was reminded of that Serbian student, who spoke about the didactical mission of documentary films, so that works promoting gender equality would not sow confusion in the minds of simple people.

think that to have a child, a man must be chosen according to his “pedigree”, his blue eyes and tall stature? Moreover, what happens if people think that strong Estonian women do not need the presence of a man to bring up children and if these mothers instill in their daughters that it is wonderful to bring up children alone, because then they can be shaped exactly as you see fit? And what happens if people forget how a child’s psyche can be affected if a succession of new fathers are seen sitting on the sofa next to mother?

The predominant mentality of the film is that one lives with men only for “financial reasons”, and from this point of view, the mother’s salary is truly a suitable guarantee of independence. The father on the sofa may change, but the main thing is that the monthly installments for the sofa are paid. However, the more human face of being a father, for example as a source of inspiration for the child, the need to see one’s child grow up, and a father’s pride in his children are left out of the picture.

However, despite the misgivings, one of the most positive outcomes of compiling a film program from 11 different countries is that the comparative material that one sees can sharpen the gaze of present and future filmmakers and help them notice topics related to gender. One can also acknowledge with pride that there is more than one sharp-witted female documentary filmmaker in Estonia, as opposed to many of the countries represented in this collective documentary film cassette.

What happens when the desires and fears reflected in the stereotype exchange places? Indeed, what happens if people, while watching Kert Grünberg's film misunderstand and



THE LEADING CHARACTER FROM THE MOVIE *AFTER ALL, I AM A WOMAN*

# ABOUT INVOLVEMENT, INSPIRATION, AND LEARNING

**ELEKA RUGAM-REBANE,**

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION ADVISER,  
DIRECTOR OF THE INCLUSION FIELD IN THE STATE CHANCELLERY

The cooperation between the Open Estonia Foundation and the State Chancellery in the field of non-governmental organizations and inclusion started in 2004. What does the cooperation consist of? Actually, it comprises a broad field of activity—starting with forming policies for the inclusion of non-governmental organizations in shaping governmental decisions, and ending with publicity projects for non-governmental organizations related to the European Union.

One of the narrower directions in this broad topic is the training of Estonian state officials abroad at the “Policy and the Public” courses in Great Britain that deal with civil society and inclusion.

In questions related to the shaping of inclusion as a policy, the OEF is the partner of the State Chancellery in the joint commission of the Estonian Civil Society Development Concept, in the creation of good involvement practices, in the training of state officials and NGOs, and in inspiring and organizing events.

The State Chancellery senses the active support of the OEF both in the generation of ideas and in the implementation of these ideas.

An actual example of the inspiration of state officials and the implementation of ideas is the idea that was initiated in 2004 to send state officials, along with representatives of non-governmental organizations, to the “Policy and the Public” courses in London. I was one of these state officials, whose understanding of the field and cooperation experience with non-governmental organizations developed to a great extent during this course.

How did the idea develop to send representatives of non-governmental organizations and state officials abroad to a course and how is this used? When performing everyday tasks, an official's concept of the activities and problems of non-governmental organizations is quite one-sided and state-institution-centered and the operating principles of state institutions and non-governmental organizations are very different. Gaining experience of



THE COURSE  
POLITICS AND  
THE PUBLIC  
IN LONDON



the differences in the operations and mindsets of these organizations could even be called a culture shock of sorts.

Being far from Estonia for the same objective and representing one's country, people from relatively diverse ways of life can often develop a sense of solidarity. I think all those who participated in the course under discussion felt this. It goes without saying that in such a situation, state officials and representatives of non-governmental organizations have the opportunity to get to know each other better and to discuss questions of mutual interest in a stress-free atmosphere. Such a form of communication can undoubtedly converge mindsets. Naturally, the participants in the course get a relatively clear idea of the cooperation that takes place between the British public sector and non-governmental organizations.

*The participants in the course include people from different countries, and even different parts of the world, which provides a good opportunity to see the current situation and developmental needs of Estonian society through the experiences of other countries.*

So this is an all-around useful enterprise—in the sense of learning in depth about the creation of networks and civil society topics.

At the initiative of the OEF, five state officials have attended the training in London since 2004—three with OEF scholarships. Now, all these officials are undoubtedly much better informed about the nature, problems, and opportunities for inclusion. Therefore, we have created a civil society network among state officials.

*The tradition must continue.*



I have usually answered as follows: Open Society Institutes were established in all Central and Eastern European countries with the support of George Soros. In Estonia this was known as the Open Estonia Foundation (OEF). All of them had the right to determine which directions and activities they wished to finance. From the start, in addition to education and culture, the OEF placed great importance

## « NETWORK OF ESTONIAN NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS ANNOUNCES BEST PRACTICES OF 2006

on supporting the development of civil society and the nonprofit sector as a whole. Assistance from other foreign supporters was added to this. As a result, various organizations have been able to make good use of Estonia's favorable environment. In addition to Soros, foreign financing came from U.S. foundations, for instance, the Baltic-American Foundation, from UN Development Aid programs, and the European Union countries. The investment by the Estonian state in civil society has been very modest.

## SYSTEMATIC DEVELOPMENT WITH THE SUPPORT OF FOREIGN MONEY

An important starting point was definitely 1991, when the OEF, along with other foundations, established the Estonian Foundation Center, which has since developed into the Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations (NENO). Already in the middle of the 1990s, the NENO started paying great attention to the training of organization members, so that they would know how to manage financial affairs, orientate in legislation, and provide services. In other words they focused on everything that guarantees the strengthening of their viability. The NENO has developed from a training and support organization into a strong tutelage and policymaking network. The reasoned and strategic approach of the NENO, along with other organizations, to the development of the third sector and society as a whole has become one of the most important factors in the development of Estonian civil society.

From the beginning, the wholesome exchange of ideas and the development of the third sector have helped to maintain a very systematic approach to non-governmental organizations. Besides, we had a large amount of foreign support funds to use in the 1990s, because almost all the western embassies and foundations supported general and specialized organizations. Supports were received primarily for carrying out specific projects. Few have provided activity support, and this was received primarily after the creation of the Baltic-American Partnership Program (BAPP).

The second point that should be mentioned is the leaders of the organizations and processes. Here we go back to George Soros, who, through special aid programs sponsored by the U.S. government, supported the Master's studies of the citizens of former Soviet Republics in U.S. universities for years. In addition to economics and legal studies, public administration that comprises civil society topics was studied by many former leaders of the NENO, in addition to consultants for the Estonian Civil Society Development Concept (ECSDC), the current faculty members at Estonian universities, lawyers, journalism managers, and cultural figures.

What did George Soros actually do? He established foundations, or a supportive system, and by providing education, prepared capable people to work in them. Such a combination is noteworthy.

*The development of Estonia's third sector has three distinctive features compared to the rest of the world: the NENO as a center was established as a membership organization, the third sector is diverse, and its development has occurred without larger scandals.*

Firstly, why was the creation of the NENO as a membership organization important? In many countries, these types of institutions have remained in the role of support centers, providing consultation, training, and information. In Estonia, the network of nonprofits was formed as a membership organization and today it is the voice of the third sector and a pioneer in many issues.

Such an umbrella organization can do a large portion of the work for the others, because not all nonprofits need to deal with, for instance, legislative drafting, tax issues, or inclusion. Thus, they can concentrate on the activities in their field of activity and do not have to worry about the activity environment.

Secondly, the development of the Estonian nonprofit sector has been very diverse. After the restoration of independence, self-initiative in such fields as culture, education, and cooperative action, which had developed historically, continued. Quite soon, modern approaches and methods also established themselves—strategic management, marketing, provision of services, and public relations.

Thirdly, thanks to fairly effective legislation, supervisory systems, and the principles of governance, there have been no great scandals, embezzlements or malpractices in the sector.

## PROBLEMS OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND FUTURE TRENDS

Despite its distinctive features, the third sector in Estonia is far from perfect. In addition to problems in every field of activity and the fact

that geographical peripheries and rural areas are lagging behind, we are also faced with several national challenges. For instance, our work is seriously complicated by the fact that the meaning of the concept of “volunteerism” has remained unclear. The second weakness is the lack of statistics. The third problem that complicates the work is the great dependence of small organizations on financiers, and even local governments.

Reduced funding from foreign foundations, the redirection of European Union project interest to non-member states, confusion regarding future financing from the public sector, and the restricted opportunities of private donations means that voluntary and nonprofit organizations need to increase their skills and knowledge regarding the possibilities for acquiring the necessary operating funds. I do not mean from new foundations, but by developing new skills.

We encourage and teach organizations to use various opportunities, not just to wait for project competitions, local government money, etc. Moreover, we encourage them to think about earning their own income. Today, the vocabularies of many organizations still lack such concepts as “clients”, “target groups” or “marketing”, because people feel that nonprofit organizations should not earn their own revenues.

The third sector must move on and free itself from project-dependency. We should be more like companies, earn our own money, develop our assets, take loans, etc. But how does one do this?

Earning money by selling goods or services is one of the basic alternatives to reduced



foreign financing and revenues from European Union projects or income that is under so-called “strict control”. It is also possible to manage by providing public services.

We are not against supports and grants, but various income opportunities simply provide a greater sense of security and a client-centered attitude. Of course, the sale of goods and services is not appropriate for all organizations, but this is still an opportunity for many who currently do not know how to use it.

But, one should not *speak* only about money. Many jobs are completed with volun-

tary help and with resources received through charity. Organizations should maintain accounts on how much work and what is done without actual monetary expenditures.

In summary, Estonia, as a small nation, is clearly moving toward a broader society. The nonprofit sector has developed independently of the public sector, and thanks to its tutelage work, activeness, and excellent people, their objectives have expanded beyond those of just one organization or sector to encompass the development of the entire society.

## FINANCING DOES NOT MEAN JUST ONE DEFINITE SOURCE, BUT ORGANIZATIONS HAVE MANY POSSIBILITIES:

- » *earn autonomous money from the sale of goods or services;*
- » *add the principle of total cost coverage to procurements and applications;*
- » *provide public services;*
- » *charitable donations.*

*One must start to search carefully beyond the organization for all the opportunities to diversify income, in order to create a funding mix.*

# A STORY ABOUT HOW THE GLOBAL BECAME LOCAL

**HELI ARU,**

CHAIRMAN OF THE LOCAL ESTONIAN EXPERT GROUP  
OF THE BALTIC-AMERICAN PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM IN 2002–2005

The formal history of the Baltic-American Partnership Fund goes back to 1998, when the United States Agency for International Development and the Open Society Institute created the Baltic-American Partnership Fund. The background for this step is related to international developments in the second half of the 1990s—although the Russian forces had left Estonia in 1994, the struggle to join the Western sphere of influence was not over for the Baltics. We had made our definite wish to join the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization known, but at the international level, the battle for the spheres of influence between the great powers had not been clearly resolved. In 1997, the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation that was signed in Par-

is had created an understanding in the Baltic countries that our freedom period may turn out to be short-lived. There was broad political support for the inclusion of the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary in NATO, but the fate of the Baltic countries remained unclear.

The United States and Baltic Charter signed in 1998 between the United States and the Baltics was to become the platform that paved the way for the Baltic States to enter NATO. Along with general security directions, the idea of this foreign policy step by the Clinton administration was to encourage all three small countries on the Baltic Sea to accelerate their economic reforms and build a multi-national democracy, by paying attention to the integration of the Russian-speaking minority.<sup>1</sup> It was this Charter that formally marked the

<sup>1</sup> Ronald Asmus, "NATO avanemine". Tallinn, 2005, pp 238–248.



THE BAPP-SUPPORTED NEWSPAPER *FOORUM* COVERED CIVIL SOCIETY ISSUES FOR YEARS



beginning of the activity trends that were the basis for the creation of Partnership Program footholds in the Baltic countries.<sup>2</sup>

And now, when the Baltic-American Partnership Program is ending, it is the right time to ask what its role has been during the time of its operation in 1999–2006. It is too early to assess its historical legacy, because the more extensive development of many fields of activity is still incomplete. Nevertheless, making a preliminary summary is probably justified. Financially, philanthropist George Soros and U.S. taxpayers have contributed 5 million dollars into strengthening Estonia's civil society through the Partnership Program, with a total of 15 million dollars for the three Baltic States. The Program has affected thousands of people. However, even more important than the large number of participants are the opportunities created to spread the mindset and practice of contemporary civil society in Estonia. Civil spirit and activity, making an independent voice heard in the decision-making processes of the state and local governments that deal with issues that affect people's lives and environment, and an increase in the vocational skills of workers in third-sector organizations, are the key phrases characterizing the allocation of activity supports. During these years, many initiatives have been supported that will leave their mark. Support for compiling the

Estonian Civil Society Development Concept passed by the Riigikogu, the multi-year activity supports for strong tutelage organizations, the testing of the idea of a local community fund in Viljandi, the numerous training programs for tutelage organizations in Tallinn and Tartu and Estonia's border regions, the creation of a competence center at Tallinn University to track the trends in civil society, and support for active young people are among such initiatives. This list could be even longer, but what is important is that attention was paid to organizations operating at both the state and grassroots levels. Supports have been distributed to ideas and organizations that discover "new territory" and have been truly innovative in Estonian circumstances. No less important has been the fact that BAPP support has been almost the only appreciable foreign aid after the retreat of the larger funders from this area in the second half of the 1990s. To the organizations that were already operating, we have offered monetary support that the state was not ready to give at the time.

The start up of the Partnership Program and its later development differed from many other international aid schemes. Within a stipulated activity framework, the Estonian expert body has had a relatively free hand in developing the strategies for allocating funds. During the years of operation, a good balance has

<sup>2</sup> Conversation with Lawrence P. Taylor, the US Ambassador to Estonia in 1995–1997 on 23 September 2006 in Jurmala.

been achieved between local and network-wide initiatives. Although discussions have taken place during every budgetary year—on the publication of a organizational newspaper, supporting research, etc.—in retrospect, we can say that these disputes always ended favorably, because the steps, perhaps initially incomprehensible for the New York headquarters, have always been clearly justified by local needs. I would like to thank all the enthusiasts that have participated in the work of the local expert body along with the workers at the Open Estonia Foundation and the Baltic-American Partnership Program! They have all based their work on the belief that the foundation for a strong and democratic country starts from a citizenry that knows its rights and dares to declare its opinions while having sufficient consideration for fellow citizens.

In conclusion, to cite Madeleine Albright, the former U.S. Secretary of State who has an East-European background<sup>3</sup>—no other part of Europe suffered more during the Cold War than the Baltic countries. We lost our security, our freedom, our independence and our well-being—in other words, everything besides our spirit and tenacity. The BAPF has assisted in the development trends that aim to create a strong and functioning civil society in the entire region. We salute the people who, during troubled times, knew how to make choices that were accompanied by significant monetary opportunities to strengthen local civil initiatives! The story of the Baltic-American Partnership Fund is a good example of how global processes in the capitals of major powers reach local grassroots and can touch all active citizens, giving them hope and belief in a better tomorrow.

<sup>3</sup> Ronald Asmus, "NATO avanemine", pp 239.

# WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT DOES A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION NEED?

**ULRIKA HURT**, HEAD OF ESTONIA'S EUROPEAN MOVEMENT IN 2005–2007

The experience of Estonia's European Movement shows two things of greatest importance for non-governmental organizations: activity support and the support of other organizations. Everything else is achieved far more easily.

What is the situation of small nonprofits? Often, coping is a problem. Furthermore the lack of opportunities for designing better and larger projects, the necessity of paying capable employees only meager compensation are also serious problems. Just like a person cannot deal with self-fulfillment without the existence of food and drink or a sense of security, a nonprofit organization cannot execute its mission efficiently, if there is not enough money to pay for better project writers.

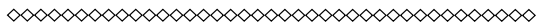
With the activity support received from the Baltic-American Partnership Program of the Open Estonia Foundation, it is possible for a nonprofit organization to cover its administrative costs, pay project writers, deal with recruiting members, and developing the organization. The same could be done with other activity supports, but for instance in 2005 the corresponding OEF/BAPP project competition was the only one in Estonia.

Project-based financing is both the joy and misfortune of nonprofit organizations. The writing of very many small-volume financing applications requires hiring a project writer and almost no other project besides the activity support finances this activity. When the service provider is an organization, the situation is not as complicated, since a project writer can then be hired with one's own funds. However,

no one is willing to write larger and more complicated projects for European Union funds for free, and therefore, one must admit that the development of smaller nonprofits is halted because of the impossibility of financing project writing.

Activity support also helps to continue one's principal activity even when a project is just ending, and a new one has yet to start, or is just being written. Therefore, activity support provides an organization with continuity and the opportunity to better plan its activities.

## SCHOOL OF YOUNG PROJECT MANAGERS



Therefore, the support that OEF/BAPP provides also adds non-monetary value—organizations that become more stable with the help of activity support are better able to support each other and cooperate. Those who have solved their so-called food and shelter worries are also able to instill courage in others.

There are foundations that prefer cooperative projects. There are nonprofit organizations that are only capable of applying for half a million kroon grants from the European Commission as parts of such consortiums. If more things could be done together rather than separately, project writing and administering money could be saved, accomplishments could be much greater and broader, and added value could be created for activity support.

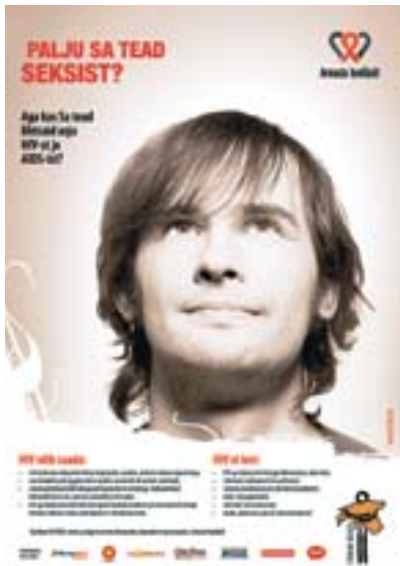
Estonia's European Movement has used OEF/BAPP activity support to cover both office expenses as well as membership events, for which money has not been received from any other project. The receipt of membership fees only partially covers membership activities. We have decided to use a considerable part of the grant to develop cooperation projects: the first of these "My Future—I Participate" was written for the European Commission in cooperation with the Estonian Institute for Future Studies and the Domus Dorpatensis Foundation, and the other larger project "Citi-



zens' Signposts" for the Ministry of the Interior in cooperation with the Civil Training Center and the Kodukant Village Movement. Hereafter, we also plan to use the larger portion of the support to write projects that would benefit more organizations than just the EEM. We consider our victories to be reaching a greater number of people, having better materials and more money to execute our ideas, but also making the nonprofit environment more pleasant. All organizations are working in the name of good objectives—to make the world better, more informed, to help those who are weaker, and to introduce people to their opportunities.

Confidence to accomplish one's goals can be achieved by the steady financing of the nonprofits that act in the interests of the general public and are capable of accomplishing more in cooperation with other organizations. Estonia's European Movement is very pleased that the OEF/BAPP that provides such activity support fund exists—it has injected a large dose of security in nonprofit organizations.





# THE STORY OF THE GOOD DEED FOUNDATION

ARTUR TAEVERE, DIRECTOR AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE GOOD DEED FOUNDATION

During its three years of operation, the Good Deed Foundation has grown from a broker of good deeds to a promoter of social enterprise in Estonia.

The activities of the Good Deed Foundation have automatically been accompanied by the principle that Estonia is filled with good will, the wish to do good deeds and to make changes. If something is missing, it is opportunities, habits, and traditions.

These opportunities, habits and traditions are what add up to civil society, as we understand it.

*A strong civil society and the habit of directing social processes do not develop by themselves.*

The degree of Estonian civil initiative clearly lags behind Western Europe, but—as if to confirm our principle—it has developed faster than many other East European countries.

When the Good Deed Foundation was established in 2003, the founders acknowledged that there were occasions when people would like to do something good for the society, but did not know how. According to the founders—who included Hannes Tamjärv, Linnar Viik and Kristina Mänd—it was to become an organization that just provided opportunities to do good.

The first step on the road was starting up the web portal [www.heategu.ee](http://www.heategu.ee) (in 2006 the portal moved to [www.vabatahtlikud.ee](http://www.vabatahtlikud.ee)), where various opportunities for social activity could be found. During the three year period, the portal has helped hundreds of good deeds to be born—the clean up of storm damage, the cleaning of birds polluted by oil, and the reading of books onto tape for the blind are just some telling examples.

However, we sensed the limits of our activities—the social activities that the [heategu.ee](http://www.heategu.ee) portal has brokered have often been non-recurring and short-termed. The non-governmental organizations that we have tried to help needed a different kind of assistance. As the next logical step, we started to work toward involving increasingly competent and sophisticated volunteers in the third sector—heads of companies, strategic consultants, financial specialists—and making non-governmental organizations more sustainable.

The Recycling Center is a good example of how voluntary experts became involved in the activities of an organization. Many volunteers from the Hansapank and other companies have assisted in the creation and development of this environmental organization from its inception until today.

In January 2005, we started the Deskmate program, which brings together heads of non-



governmental organizations with heads of companies for one year, to “sit at the same desk” and discuss management issues. To date, about ten non-governmental organizations have participated; volunteers from Hansapank, KPMG, Oracle, Elisa and elsewhere have helped NGOs with strategic counseling.

Although we think Deskmates and the relations of NGOs with the business world are an important way to make Estonia’s civil society stronger, many of the weaknesses of non-governmental organizations are already long-term and overcoming them will not take place overnight. The annual NGO sustainability index compiled by the USAID indicates that financing issues are the primary weakness of Estonian NGOs. Estonia’s NGOs are too dependent on project-based financing; and the development of the organizations is inhibited by the lack of strategic plans and sustainable action models.

Therefore, as the third step in the development of the Good Deed Foundation, we have arrived at social enterprise—in other words we have come to the realization that in order to create a positive change in the society, entrepreneurial leaders capable of building sustainable organizations are needed.

*Social entrepreneurs are people who are dedicated to putting new ideas, sometimes seemingly preposterous ones, into practice.*

They are resourceful and very persistent in realizing their dreams. One or a few brilliant individ-

uals will not suffice for the birth of long-term social change—sustainable and self-financing organizations are also needed. Social enterprise differs from ordinary nonprofits in that the revenue base of nonprofits is primarily or entirely dependent on project money—

*be it the non-profit Hingest that markets the handicrafts of disabled people; the Recycling Center, which primarily recycles used articles; or Cafedirect, which sells “equitable” coffee and tea, by paying its producers much higher prices than usual.*

Thanks to carefully conceived and effective business models, social enterprises can pay their workers better wages, invest in making their organization more professional, and thereby better fulfill their social mission.

We believe that by supporting start-up social businesses and operating entrepreneurial NGOs, we can significantly help positive change come about in Estonian society. We are sure that the more allies, partners, and supporters we find, the more successful we will be. We are thankful for all our volunteers, supporters, and cooperation partners—while special thanks go to the Open Estonian Foundation, which has helped to develop the Good Deed Foundation as an organization, and to the Hansapank, which has been our primary supporter.

The challenges for Estonia’s society have not been reduced during the years. We can be sure that interesting times await us.

THE GOOD  
DEED  
FOUNDATION  
TEAM



# THE ESTONIAN DEBATING SOCIETY FROM VARIOUS VIEWPOINTS

**KATRIN VIRU**, CHAIRWOMAN OF THE BOARD OF THE ESTONIAN DEBATING SOCIETY

*“The lack of reasoned discussion is quite great in Estonian society today.”  
(Toomas Luman, Chairman of the Estonian Chamber of Commerce  
and Industry, at the 2005 Pärnu Management Conference)*

In the 2006 Freedom House review, Estonia is listed as the least corrupt former Soviet Republic, as well as being very successful in e-governance and the use of the Internet in comparison to the entire world. At the same time, there are many fields of activity now, and certainly in the future, that deserve more serious and thorough discussion. Such areas include intolerance towards minority groups, the energy issue, gender equality, the integration of various minorities, education, the development of non-governmental organizations, etc. During the past few years, all the topics at debating tournaments have been based on problems on the Estonian, European, or world agenda that need solutions, in order to make young people discuss important issues and compare the arguments of opposing sides.

The mission of the Estonian Debating Society is to instill the mindset that in social dialogue, stronger and better arguments are decisive, and to develop the necessary skills.

The debating movement started in 1994 as a program of the Open Estonia Foundation. Since 1998, we have been an independent nonprofit organization drawing together approximately 700 people from across Estonia. For the accomplishment of its goals, the soci-

ety has created a network of clubs and organizes at least 30 events every year. These take place at local, national, and international levels—summer camps, beginner and advanced tournaments for students from basic schools, secondary schools and university; training, the “Fookus” public debating series, participation in the European and World Championships; the organization of the 2004 International Youth Forum, and Tallinn Intervarsity 2007, and much more. In recognition of the work to date, in 2004, the Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations chose the Estonian Debating Society as the best nonprofit organization.

Often enterprises are measured by their profitability. What profit could debating activities generate? Why is it needed? I would differentiate between the personal, social and international dimensions.

The value of educated and well-educated people in society is inestimable. When young people hold democratic understandings, they contribute to their personal development, appreciate teamwork and the opinions of others, know and sense problems on the agenda in Estonia, Europe, and the world as a whole, understand both sides of most issues, and form their final understanding based on meaningful and weighed argumentation. Is there an

WINNERS OF HIGH SCHOOL DEBATING  
COMPETITION 2005–2006 – MARILIIS METS,  
SIGRID SOLNIK AND MART MOORA

alternative for a thinking citizen? The Estonian Debating Society thinks not. We know that with the help of debating, every young person becomes a better and more responsible person and thinker. At one stage of last year's championships, secondary school students debated the plusses and minuses of right- and left-wing worldviews. Some of the young people that supported a right-wing mindset mentioned at the end of the tournament that, after the debate, they understood left-wing policies considerably better and saw some substantial benefits in them. The greater the ratio of people in the society with debating and presentation skills, the more willing they are to make considered decisions on a personal level.

It often seems that society is an "elusive animal". It is not clear where or how it affects us, what the bases are for the development of local attitudes and values, and our behavior. Andero Uusberg, the previous chairman of the EDS supervisory board has formulated the following answer:

*"A wider distribution of argumentation skills would reduce the number of decisions made in both the public and private sectors without sufficient meaningful analysis. Such argumentation skills would also decrease the sad correlation between superficial election campaigns and low voter turnout, and the inability of interest groups to use the mechanism created to influence many decisions."*

In addition, these same skills are increasingly decisive in the ability to break through in the contemporary economic space. Therefore, better argumentation skills would help Estoni-



ans use the opportunities of a capitalist and democratic society more effectively." Education related to debating and argumentation and a high level of education in the society would guarantee more sensible decisions, reduce the possibility of using demagogical and manipulative methods to achieve one's goals and would create a basis for a more meaningful and thorough treatment of topics, to distinguish the important from the unimportant.

The international aspect is also important at the Estonian Debating Society—we provide numerous opportunities for participation as a debater, or member of the coaching or organizing team at international debating events. Estonia debaters have become European champions, have reached the finals in the public speaking category of the World Championships, and achieved third place in secondary school debating among teams speaking English as a foreign language. A very visible confirmation of the effectiveness of the activities directed at young people has been the impressive development of many former debaters in their profession.

The Debating Society has been a lucky organization because many of its alumni have remained connected to it at various levels—as members of the supervisory board, coaches, trainers, or volunteers. Many of them have said the reason is that they want to pass on that which is good and valuable to the younger generation, that which they themselves have acquired from debating for use in everyday life. In other words they want to demonstrate how much they have learned and developed through debating.

# A MANIFESTO THAT MADE CIVIL SOCIETY AUDIBLE

URMO KÜBAR, THE HEAD OF THE NETWORK ESTONIAN NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS (NENO)

The Riigikogu elections in Estonia take place in March, and therefore, a political party used a once famous line of poetry by Henrik Visnapuu, “This year spring will arrive differently” in its campaign. For non-governmental organizations, the March 2007 elections truly arrived differently—the organizations presented a political manifesto, which resulted in non-governmental organizations becoming a separate chapter in the coalition agreement for the first time.

The manifesto that was supported by the Open Estonia Foundation, and the Baltic-American Partnership Program reversed the pre-election practices of the organizations to date. Instead of just asking what the programs of the political parties promise for the development of non-governmental organizations, the organizations themselves compiled a plan of action necessary for the development of civil society and non-governmental organizations and the supportive steps they expected from the Riigikogu and Government.

As it should be in a participatory society, the voters and the elected are not opposing camps that battle for their own gain, but partners in dialogue, who discuss their activities in the name of common goals.

Of course, society is not a laboratory where one can exactly deduce the chain of events by carrying out experiments in different ways. Thus, the manifesto also had many co-travelers, which in the end helped us reach the goal. At the end of summer 2006, the presidential elections were accompanied by a wave of civil activism, the like of which had not been seen

in Estonia for many years. When the Minister of the Environment advised the citizenry to “stick to their lasts” instead of expressing their opinions, a meeting gathered in Tammsaare Park on the last day prior to the elections, the mood of which was similar to that of the Singing Revolution almost twenty years ago. People actively spoke out on the topics of business and political power in the fall, in connection with the demolition of the Sakala Center, which was accompanied by a lively discussion on the themes of civil society in the press. The Estonian organizations themselves had also become more effective than ever before in their activities to inspire social change.

Clauses on the establishment of a Civil Society Foundation, systematizing the principles for the funding of NGOs from the state budget, compiling a plan for civic education, transferring public services to NGOs, reviewing tax benefits, and increasing public awareness were included in the coalition agreement. The influence of the manifesto is definitely not limited to this.

Firstly, the process itself was important for the non-governmental organizations. Compiling the manifesto from September to November 2006 gave the NGOs the opportunity to think through together the things that affect the development of civil society in Estonia. Scores of NGOs participated actively in the writing. There were hundreds that contributed an idea or commentary. The number of organizations that were involved through umbrella organizations and networks exceeded a thousand. During the most intense pre-election



period, the NGOs formed a pan-Estonian network that submitted questions to the candidates about the manifesto or topics related to civil society by e-mail or at campaign events.

Secondly, the manifesto brought the opportunities and developmental needs of civil society clearly to the attention of politicians, the media and the public. Estonia's top journalists volunteered to compile special newspapers to introduce the proposals of the NGOs. The meeting regarding the manifesto with the political parties in December and January were educational for both sides. At the same time, the cancellation of the traditional assessment of the civil society in the Riigikogu before the elections (with the excuse that the politicians were not capable of business-like analysis at that time and that which was said before the

election would not be morally binding on the new Riigikogu and Government) demonstrated that the political parties were not ready to have the people assess their activities. Assessment is important not only in election decisions made every four years, but also in a business-like analysis of what has been done and how, what has not been done and why, as well as what can be learned from mistakes made and how to proceed.

Thirdly the manifesto provides a measuring rod for all those who wish to assess how the new Riigikogu and Government have helped to promote civil society. Prior to the election, NENO collected answers from the political parties for every clause, and will start to regularly compile reviews of the activities in each field.

## BIRTH OF THE MANIFESTO

- » Summer 2006 – the idea and objectives of the manifesto are discussed by the OEF/BAPP and NENO.
- » September 2006 – the idea is introduced to the NGOs and proposals for the content of the manifesto start to be collected.
- » October 2006 – the first draft of the manifesto is completed, and opinions regarding the text are gathered by the Internet, consultations take place with umbrella organizations and networks. Hundreds of NGOs throughout Estonia participate.
- » November 2006 – the final version of the manifesto is completed, which contains 20 proposals in three sub-topics—inclusion, civic education, and the sustainability of NGOs.
- » December 2006 – January 2007 – meetings take place with the six largest political parties aspiring to the Riigikogu, to whom the proposals are introduced and explained.
- » January-February 2007 – two special newspapers dealing with the manifesto are inserted into the Eesti Päevaleht and Postimees, which are compiled with the voluntary help of many of Estonia's top journalists.
- » February 2007 – with the votes of the coalition parties, the Riigikogu decides to cancel the planned discussion on the development of the civil society; a public debate took place between the NGOs and political parties, with a hundred participants. An ad hoc cooperation network of NGOs is formed that presents questions to politicians by e-mail and at campaign events.
- » March 2007 – elections and coalition negotiations.
- » April 2007 – the coalition agreement is signed, with a chapter entitled "Civil Society and Statehood", which includes several proposals presented in the manifesto.



# SHORT OVERVIEW OF DEMOCRATIC MONITORING

**IVI PROOS**, OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE, CO-AUTHOR OF THE DEMOCRATIC MONITORING

With the support of the Open Estonia Foundation, a research team of social scientists prepared an analysis of the status of Estonian democracy in 2005 and organized its monitoring. This research project was entitled "Democracy and National Interests".

The working group had five members: sociologists Juhan Kivirähk, Iris Pettai, Ivi Proos (project manager), political scientist Raivo Vetik, and philosopher Ülo Kaevats. Sociologists Tiina Raitviir and Tõnis Saarts also participated in the project.

Many countries have started to conduct democratic audits and to test the quality of their democracies. The larger countries with traditions of democratic audits include England and Sweden. To date, Estonia has lacked this tradition. The assessment of democracy and a democratic monitoring was carried out with the support of the OEF.

In the course of the democratic monitoring, we analyzed the status of Estonia's democracy and indirectly answered the question, "How well is the Estonian state governed?" Democratic monitoring can be treated as the first preparatory stage for conducting a democratic audit. Ideally, democratic auditing should become a regular feature of analyzing and assessing democracy in Estonia, which would be organized every year, as it is in Sweden.

To introduce the results of the project, we organized a report on the status of democracy.

# ASSESSMENT OF DEMOCRACY IN ESTONIA

For a short description of the project results, I will use the analysis of the expert opinions carried out as one module of the monitoring. The experts assessed the processes taking place in society, primarily the government-related changes which indirectly reflect the status of democracy in the country. The experts assessed the problems, which, according to generally recognized methods, are used as the most important indicators in democratic audits. The indicators were grouped in three principal fields of activity, which help to assess the success of democracy in a country: 1) popular government, 2) legislative government, and 3) effective government. The experts who were queried included top politicians, members of the Riigikogu, and social scientists.

When compiling the methodology for the expert questionnaire, we paid the most attention to the components of democracy that reflect popular government. We take the position that this is the field of activity where democracy in Estonia suffers the greatest shortcomings.



The expert assessments on the status of democracy in Estonia were similar in the case of some indicators, and differed significantly in others. This indicates that the understandings of top politicians and social scientists with respect to democracy may be very different. Therefore, it is important that the experts represent a broad scale of social groups. Both expert groups can be classified as opinion leaders in society.

A common understanding of the

### *weakness of Estonian democracy*

was primarily expressed by the experts in four fields of activity. In the case of these indicators, the opinions of the politicians and the social scientists coincided. The weaknesses of democracy were:

1. weak non-governmental organizations;
2. tensions caused by social stratification;
3. the intertwining of business and politics;
4. scarcity of social capital—lack of credibility among people.

The politicians also considered the political bias of the media and the untrustworthiness of the media to be a weakness of Estonia's democracy. Social scientists did not assess the problems with democracy related to the media to be significant.

*The social scientists highlighted the following as significant hindrances to democracy: the unethical behavior of politicians, lack of a clear vision for the future development of Estonia, and the inability of the governmental leaders and politicians to consolidate the society.*

The social scientists emphasized the non-professionalism of politicians and governmental leaders as a weakness of Estonian democracy. The politicians did not see these as hindrances to democracy.

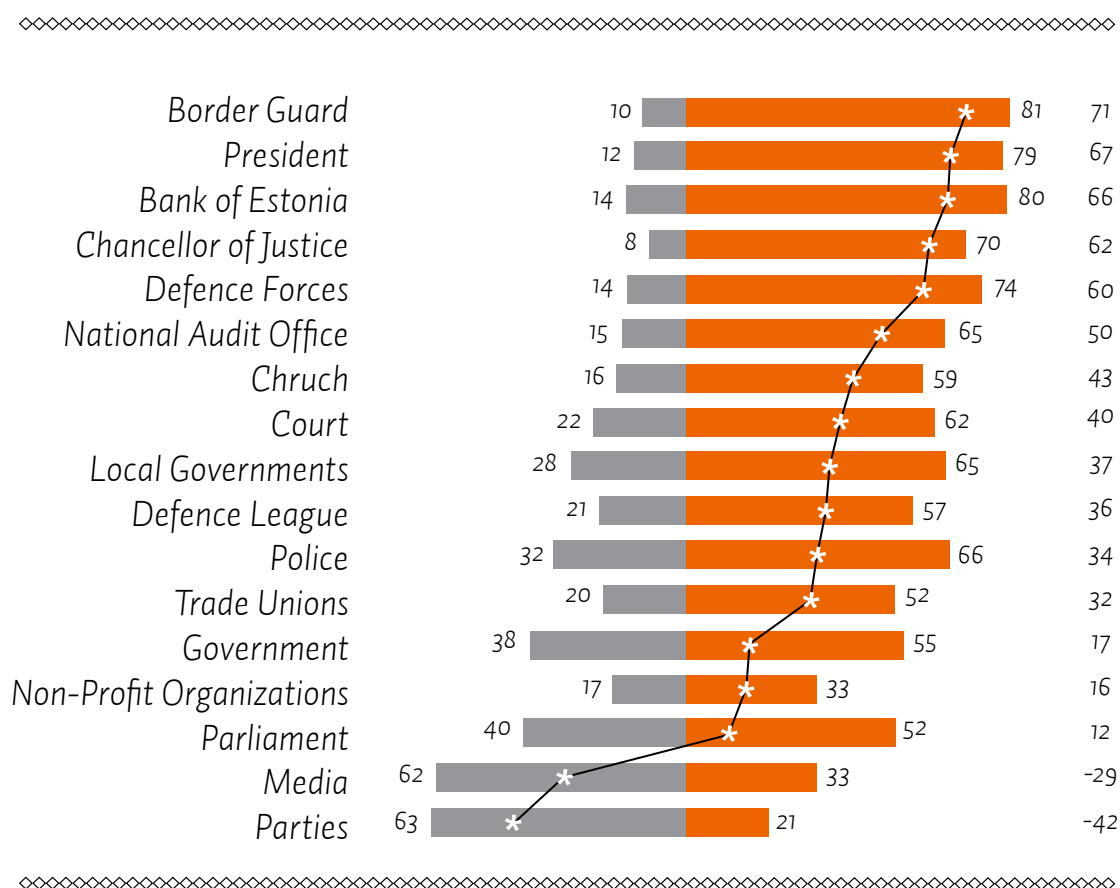
The experts had similar opinions about the *strengths of Estonian democracy.*

They thought that the classical trait of democracy—free elections—was in the best condition. The experts felt that the status of social tolerance was very good. Among minority groups, the experts felt that the rights of religious and racial minorities were the best protected. The experts gave a positive general assessment to the consideration of the interests of other minority groups. According to the experts, the rights of racial minorities, women, homosexuals, and the Russian-speaking minority are guaranteed in Estonia.

THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT WISH TO ACCEPT  
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ASSESSMENT GIVEN  
TO DEMOCRACY

The results of the democratic monitoring were of great interest to the media and the informed part of the public, as well as opinion leaders. We also discussed the current state of Estonian democracy, and the weaknesses and strengths of local democracy, with top politicians. The Office of the Chancellor of Justice acknowledged our research team for organizing the democratic monitoring. However, with the help of our first democratic monitoring,

we were not able to pressure the ruling elite or to create a situation in which the top leaders of the nation become interested in regular democratic audits or assessments of democracy in Estonia. Ideally, regular democratic audits would be financed from the state budget. Currently, the Estonian political culture is insufficient to prompt the government to order state democratic audits from independent experts.



*Trust in public institutions in October, 2005.*

Trustworthy ● Not trustworthy ● Gross \*

THE ROLE  
OF THINK TANKS  
IN A DEMOCRATIC  
SOCIETY:  
FIVE YEARS SINCE  
THE ESTABLISHMENT  
OF THE PRAXIS CENTER  
FOR POLICY STUDIES

**RUTA KRUUDA** DIRECTOR OF PRAXIS IN 2001–2004

The PRAXIS Center for Policy Studies that was established in 2000 is the first independent, nonprofit think tank in Estonia, whose objective is to support the formulation of policies based on analysis, research and the principles of participatory democracy. PRAXIS was established with the support of private individuals and the Open Society Institute.

In the political philosophy of Ancient Greece, the word *praxis* meant practical wisdom, which, in addition to skills and intellectual capabilities, includes the setting of proper goals where this knowledge can be applied.

Such knowledge is a good basis for governance. The goal of the PRAXIS Center for Policy Studies is to assemble and use this knowledge to find the sore points in the society and to offer various solutions, as well as to develop policy analysis skills in Estonian society. Through our activities and together with all our associates, we hope to contribute to an increase in the capabilities of the third sector in Estonia, to develop the principles of civil society, and to raise the social well-being through better and knowledge-based decisions.

## SUMMARY OF THE ORGANIZATION

PRAXIS is focused on three principal directions: work and social policies, innovation policies, and education policies. In addition, we have initiated and participated in various projects dealing with the effects of state finance, and housing policies and legislation. Since 2004, in addition to our principal fields of activity, we have increasingly concentrated on the development of health policies. Our team includes economic, public administration, health care, and education specialists, which is undoubtedly a good precondition for the use, implementation, and promotion of cross-sector knowledge. We employ a total of 13 people including technical workers.

The objective of the

### *work and social policies program*

is to analyze events in the labor market and in the social sector, and to assess the efficiency of work and social policies and their influences on the socio-economic situation. Under examination are the effects of social support and taxation on the labor market, the efficiency of active work policies, social dialogue, and collective work relations, the mobility of labor, and the influence of the European Union accession on the labor market and social field.

### *The innovation policies program*

focuses on Estonia's economy, the assessment of the competitiveness of the Central and Eastern European countries, and the development of the corresponding policy recommendations. In connection with the importance of information technology and biotechnology, future monitoring in these fields has been conducted, and the social aspects of the information society analyzed.

### *The education policies program*

focuses on projecting training needs and the schooling network, analyzing the fulfillment of schooling obligations and the dropout trend, as well as tracking and analyzing education policy trends in developed countries.

### *The health policies program*

focuses on the comparison of health systems in different countries, the development of health policies in the European Union, the financing of health care, the assessment of the efficiency of public health programs, including in the field of HIV/AIDS, and the analysis of health care reforms in transition countries.

In addition to analyses made in the principal field of activity, PRAXIS has reserved the right to initiate research in other fields of activity that are important from the viewpoint of society's development, but which, for various reasons, have not received sufficient or professional treatment, or which are currently not top priorities. As a think tank, our assignment and responsibility is to direct society's attention to the topics that are more directed at the future.

## FINANCING AND INDEPENDENCE

PRAXIS is financed by public organizations. To build up the organization itself, we receive an institutional grant from the Open Society Institute (OSI), which forms almost 50% of our budget. The ratio of support from the research funds provided by European Union Framework Programs is constantly increasing. A smaller but increasing ratio comes from the public and private sectors.

*It is good to acknowledge that the demand for policy analysis in the public sector has increased constantly. On the one hand, this is a sign that our work is appreciated and the opportunities for and awareness of the necessity for policy analysis, as well as their use, have significantly improved. On the other hand, this demonstrates a wish to get a more thorough overview of what is happening in society, along with descriptions of possible practical solutions.*

The existence and abundance of financing sources is essential in guaranteeing the independence of a think tank, but this is not solely important. The freedom of a think tank to choose the research topics and problems in the society to which the government and the media have not paid sufficient attention, and which are not dependent upon the interests of financiers, politicians, or private individuals is just as important.

## CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The future operation of think tanks depends on steady financing, the existence of competent people, the capability of the public sector, and the promotion of the political culture to a level where knowledge and analysis are taken into account when making decisions.

For a small nation like Estonia, people and their correspondence to requirements is of decisive importance. Add to this the assignment of research centers and think tanks to provide proper work, as well as applicable and practical recommendations that can create added value for the society. Working at a think tank is a challenge for both scientists and practitioners; on the one hand, because it requires

knowledge and skills that are applicable in science, and on the other hand, because it assumes an excellent understanding of what is happening in the public sector and of the development of society. More attention must be paid to the possibilities for assembling and using the best knowledge in the country.

The stability of financing is and will remain a principal issue for think tanks. Despite the increases in recent years, support from the public sector still forms only a small part of the think tank's budget and the interest of the private sector in supporting the development of a knowledge-based society is limited. Estonia's success and accession to the European Union has also reduced the number of opportunities for receiving support from international organizations and foundations, which have directed their attention to the deprived regions of the world. At the same time, the accession to the European Union creates a greater need to focus on the amplification of common European interests, including taking the interests and opportunities of Estonia as a small nation into consideration. As a European Union member nation, it is our obligation to help in the achievement of the goals set in the Lisbon Strategy. Besides, Estonia has gained excellent experience as a transition country, which can help to support the development of democracy in other countries within the framework of narrow research projects, as well as part of broader international development cooperation.

I believe that, with its activities to date, PRAXIS has already made a contribution to Estonia's development through quality policy analysis, which is widely used by decision-makers and quoted in the media. The concept of a think tank has also become more accepted, which is testimony to the fact that, by developing society through our work and participation, we have been able to make the need for think tanks and their role in a democratic society more understandable.

# GENDER STUDIES IN ESTONIA

RAILI PÕLDSAAR, LECTURER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

During the last 15 years, we have learned to look at the world from new angles. We have also begun to understand that ideas that were considered natural and the only ones possible in the past were often culturally based and just one of the many variations in use in the world. Our understanding of the surrounding reality has become more complicated and also more varied.

One of these reconsidered phenomena is gender. The empty slogans of the Soviet period have turned into a central axis in understanding society.

*Academic gender studies, which examine the effects of gender on people and the society, have developed in Estonia. Therefore, more attention is now being paid to problems such as family violence and trafficking in women. Furthermore, one has learned to notice the politically meaningful lines drawn in the division of roles at work and in the home,*

and new approaches have been found for the texts and pictures that surround us. People have started to understand that by making fossilized gender roles more flexible we can improve the mental and physical health of our society.

Although gender studies are frequently demonized along with feminism, and our public discourse, which likes to identify with primitive masculinity, loves to make fun of this, it is increasingly difficult to ignore gender. Gender studies, which were initially branded as a form of cultural imperialism, are now being adapted to our academic landscape. Current Estonian gender studies are varied and internationally recognized; research in the humanities and social sciences are carried out at both the University of Tartu and Tallinn University, and increasing numbers of female and male students are taking courses related to gender studies.

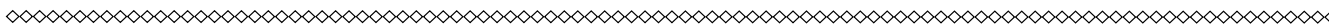
However, gender research in Estonia cannot develop alone. This is a phenomenon that is yet to be academically "legitimized", and lacks clear institutional support. Our research and educational institutions have learned to include gender perspectives in their projects, but often this is only a formal gesture. Scientists that deal with gender studies still must justify their necessity and battle against prejudices.





A GENDER SEMINAR IN TARTU BROUGHT TOGETHER SCIENTISTS THAT DEAL WITH GENDER STUDIES IN TARTU AND IN TALLINN

Therefore, the part played by Open Estonia Foundation and its scholarships have been very important. With their help, Estonian scientists have received the opportunity to supplement their studies at foreign universities and research institutions, to participate in conferences and seminars, and to work in libraries. In addition to the obvious benefit that comes from scientific dialogue with the world's top specialists and to the acquisition of new knowledge, these short visits have significant added value. By coming into contact with colleagues worldwide, our scientists and students, who often work in an indifferent or even hostile environment, get intellectual support and the knowledge that what they are doing is important and they are not alone in their activities. These small injections of energy enable them to continue their activities with new vitality when they return to Estonia. The goal—a decent Estonia for everyone, both women and men—is clearly necessary for the entire society, and hopefully, domestic financiers of research and education will soon understand this. Until then—words of thanks to the Open Estonia Foundation for filling this gap.



# ABOUT THE LIMITS OF OPENNESS

DAVID VESVIOV, HISTORIAN

Miloš Forman's biographical film *The People vs. Larry Flynt*, which won the top prize at the Berlin Film Festival, and the hero of which was Larry Flynt, the founder of the porno magazine *Hustler*, raises a question about the limits of the freedom of speech in an extreme manner characteristic of cinema art. As becomes apparent from the film in a somewhat tragicomic way, people's understandings of these limits differ significantly—why else would they try to imprison and kill the film's hero. Naturally, Miloš Forman's movie is not a limitless ode to the freedom of speech. Freedom of speech has limits and exceeding these limits in a specific situation may end in catastrophe. In the film, this means being shackled to a wheelchair and AIDS; however, in "great history", results in millions of spiritual and physical cripples or corpses.

*Freedom of speech, narrowly, and openness, more broadly, have limits, and the question is not who establishes these limits and how—society as a whole, as a result of discussion and agreement, essentially voluntarily, or authorities, by force without asking anyone, involuntarily.*

Everything is clear with the limits of closed societies. They are defiantly visible and primitive, reminiscent of prison walls. The story with the limits of open societies is much more complicated. They are not illuminated by projec-

tors, and they are more perceptible. Perceiving them assumes culture and intellectual power.

The value of an open society is its complexity and the Open Society Forums organized by the Open Estonia Foundation in 1996 made a significant contribution to understanding this. Important societal problems were discussed and they have always brought together a large number of opinion leaders from various walks of life and aroused lively discussions in the society.

*Below is a list of the topics and main speakers at the recent Open Society Forums.*

In 2001, the sixth forum took place, which focused on the topic of social investments. At the forum, where the main speakers were Michael Brophy, the head of the Charities Aid Foundation from Great Britain and Gregory Berzonsky, the vice-president of the United Way International from the United States, the strategy of companies pertinent to social investments were spoken about and discussions were conducted on how social investments help people's well-being and create a more favorable business environment.

The guest speaker at the 2002 Open Society Forum, entitled "Globalization Challenges" was Susan George, the author of the sensational book *The Lugano Report: On Preserving Capitalism in the Twenty-First Century*. In the presentations at the forum, the impact of glo-

balization on politics, economics, culture, and the media were examined.

The theme of the eighth forum (2003) was "Conflict and Agreement" and asked whether agreement is possible without conflict, legitimacy without dialogue, or democracy without participation. The addresses by Professor David Graeber of Yale University, Aet Annist, Doctor of Social Anthropology at the University of London University, Professor Marju Lauristin of the University of Tartu, and other speakers included discussions on the themes of political debate and the possibility of expanding the circle of participants therein, as well as raised questions regarding the possibilities of achieving a social contract and the validity thereof.

The 2004 forum was entitled "Democracy in Europe, America, the World". Lectures were delivered by Professor John Keane of the University of Westminster, Paul Berman, Senior Analyst at the World Policy Institute in New York and author of *Terror and Liberalism*, and Professor Rein Raud. Ideas were exchanged on the following issues: Is democracy at risk in America? Are the problems in the field of democracy similar in the European Union and America? Can America set an example for Europe? Is democracy in the American way suitable for Europeans?

The topic of the next forum, "Where Does Europe End" (2005) was borders, specifically European borders. This time, the main speaker was Jeremy Rifkin, President of the Foundation on Economic Trends in Washington D.C., Michael Emerson, Senior Research Fellow at the Center for European Policy Studies in Brussels, Graham Avery, Director of the European Commission's Directorate General for Enlargement, and Toomas Hendrik Ilves.

**ROBERT PUTNAM,**  
MAIN SPEAKER OF THE FORUM  
"SOCIAL CAPITAL IN A CHANGING WORLD"

In 2006, the topic of the 11th Open Society Forum was "Social Capital in a Changing World". The speakers included Professor Robert D. Putman, Doctor Aet Annist, Professor Mikko Lagerspetz, and Professor Rein Raud.

The Open Society Forums have focused attention on various social problems, which by nature have a direct or indirect connection to the principal directions of the Open Estonia Foundation. An attempt has been made to theoretically interpret one's own activities. Although, the precondition for success can only be meaningful activity.

The presentations made at the Open Society Forums are also interesting to read later on after they are published, because the topics have not lost their topicality. To be persuaded of this, one need only reread the presentations from the 2003 Forum that dealt with conflicts and agreements, for instance, Enn Soosaar's article "Conflict and Agreement as a Precondition and Qualification of Being Human". Or have a look at what Rein Raud says in his article "Cultural Conflict / Cultural Consensus", or Marju Lauristin in her presentations "Ways of Achieving Agreement".

The significance of the Open Society Forums is that they have gathered prominent thinkers to discuss the eternal problems of social life and made the course of their discussions available to the Estonian society.



# CITIZENS HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW

**MARE HAAB**, VICE-DIRECTOR OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT INFORMATION OFFICE IN ESTONIA

Ten years ago, Estonia submitted an official application to become a full member of the European Union. On May 1st, we celebrate the anniversary of achieving membership status. Publicity activities related to the European Union, jointly organized by the Open Estonia Foundation and the State Chancellery, are also celebrated on the "anniversary". The cornerstone of this cooperation has been, and still is, the common understanding that citizens have the right to know why something occurs in their country, to know how their country is being led, and who is doing the leading.

Publicity and systematic informational work related to the European Union started right after the opening of accession negotiations. Looking back, one can acknowledge that subsequently, the various governments have been able to preserve continuity in respect to three fundamental tenets: educational-type publicity activities are most important; reasoned discussions are guaranteed by the publicity organized through NGOs and their own networks; the government remains objective and impartial in EU-related discussions. It is entirely clear that the state must guarantee the availability of Euro-information to everyone living here. Furthermore, this information

must be transmitted continually and cannot depend on elections or other events related to party politics. The press has had an important role to play in informing the public about the EU. However, the need for educational information has turned out to be greater than the journalistic news items and commentaries transmitted by the media have been able to provide. Therefore, it

has been necessary to find trustworthy “shortcuts” to reach active and less active people.

# THE OPEN ESTONIA FOUNDATION?

Through the years, both well-meaning and spiteful questions have been asked about why the Open Estonia Foundation is the partner organization for publicity projects. And, as is always the case with project-type work and the distribution of pooled resources, the answer is clear: cooperation is determined by competency and resources that can be joined to create significant added value. Luckily, successful longstanding cooperation has confirmed that

the chosen form is justified in every way and it has also continued efficiently after the accession to the European Union. Training and publicity cannot take place efficiently for a very long, if assisted only by enthusiasm and fervor—inevitably, money is also needed for activities. Combined bilateral money significantly increases the number of support recipients. The larger the number of NGOs involved, the more people will benefit from the publicity projects through the receipt of new information and participation in discussions on social problems. An indirect benefit is that the applicants acquire experience in project work, which in the European Union today is a skill that provides great opportunities.

## WHAT NOW?

Being in the European Union does not reduce the citizens' rights to receive information about their own country and the specific and general developmental trends in the European Union. Quite the opposite: a sign of a healthy and strong society is that an informed citizenry participate in discussions of European affairs every day, not only at "window-dressing events". The *information days, seminars, discussion clubs, and debates* that have become traditional *continue to have their place in EU-related publicity activities, because life around us is not "finished"*. One must keep up-dated on the new topics in the European Union in order to participate in an intelligent manner in the discussion on Old World affairs. After all, no one wants to hear only meaningless nagging.



EUROPEAN DAY, 2007

# THE ESTONIAN NGO CONTACT GROUP FOR EUROPE'S FUTURE

ANNIKA KOOL, CONTACT GROUP COORDINATOR

## THE CREATION AND FIRST STEPS OF THE CONTACT GROUP

The Estonian Civil Society Contact Group for the European Convention started its activities in the summer of 2002. By that time, the European Convention had already been operating for several months, and was preparing the basic materials for the Sixth Intergovernmental Conference (IC). The European Convention comprised representatives of the governments and parliaments of the Union's member and candidate states and other European institutions. This time, the IC was to find an answer to the question, "In what direction should the European Union develop, in order to correspond to the expectations of the citizens and to fulfill as well as possible its role as a promoter of stability, well-being and democratic values." In Estonia, it was decided to establish the Estonian Civil Society Contact Group for the European Convention, which would provide Estonian NGOs with the opportunity to participate in the discussions about Europe's future. The Open Estonia Foundation made a rapid decision to support the activities of the Contact Group both financially and morally, by enabling a full-time Contact Group coordinator to be hired, by providing workspace, and by supporting the organization of events.

The opening meeting took place in August 2002 with the participation of invited representatives from more than 40 organizations.

These were non-governmental organizations from various walks of life, because there was no restriction on the fields of activity. However, it was assumed that the associations would be in favor of Estonia's membership in the European Union, in order to avoid a "pro and con" debate within the Contact Group. In the subsequent weeks, discussions took place among the NGO representatives on the role of the national parliaments, the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the principle of subsidiarity, according to which decisions should be made at the level closest to the citizenry (local, state, or European Union), in other words, Brussels should only handle those things which cannot be resolved at the state or local level. The will to participate and interest in participation was great and the proposals and commentaries were thorough. Support was expressed for increasing the relative importance of the national parliaments, inserting the Charter of Fundamental Rights into the Treaty, and the more forceful exposure of the principle of subsidiarity. Somewhat later, the external affairs and internal security of the European Union was scrutinized, in which case, the specificity of the topics had an effect and the interest of the associations decreased. At the same time, a series of public events called "Europe's Future Stories" were organized to increase public awareness, in which scientists, politicians, and other experts introduced EU economic cooperation, the role of the parliaments of the member states, and the plans for development cooperation to the NGOs.



The organizational working group that was formed at the opening meeting became the nucleus of the Contact Group, which comprised the initiators of the Contact Group and joint representatives of the Estonian Society for Nature Protection, the Estonian Farmers' Federation and the youth organizations. The remaining "membership" of the Group was variable, and all interested organizations were invited to join. The number of participants in the list soon approached a hundred.

## THE CONTACT GROUP IN 2003: EUROPEAN CONSTITUTIONAL TREATY

At the beginning of 2003, the European Convention entered a new era of activities—the draft articles for the European Constitutional Treaty started to be reviewed in turn. During the first half of 2003, the Contact Group met with the Convention members to discuss the articles, and an assessment was made of our government's positions in the Convention. It turned out that the topics of concern for the NGOs and the government officials coincides to a great extent—the primary concern was the need to preserve Estonia's right to independent decisions, while also striving for as efficient and democratic a European Union as possible. Keywords like "federalism" and "subsidiarity" arose in almost all the debates in the Contact Group.

In the spring of the same year, the Act4Europe campaign was taking off, which was initiated by the NGO umbrella organizations for four spheres in Brussels (the environment, development cooperation, social issues, and human rights). With the help of this campaign, an attempt was made to involve the citizens of the member states in propaganda work on behalf of a European Union that would be transparent, democratic, fair, and correspond to the hopes of the citizens. Together with Act4Europe, our Contact Group carried out a participatory democracy campaign in order to strengthen the participatory democracy article in the draft of the European Constitutional Contract. The summer ended the activities of the Con-

vention and the pause that developed was used by the Open Estonia Foundation to organize a conference on the topic of the future of the European Union, which, with support from the European Commission's Phare Small Projects Program, took place on September 5, 2003 at the Estonian National Library. The conference, entitled "A New Europe for Everyone: the Civil Society Builds Bridges" brought together representatives from Estonian and European NGOs, politicians and others interested parties, to discuss the participatory opportunities of NGOs in European Union policymaking. The speakers at the conference included such leading figures as Mary McPhail, the Secretary General of the European Women's Lobby, Finnish Parliament Member Heidi Hautala, Dick Oosting, the Director of the European Union Bureau of Amnesty International, and many others. During the next few days, Nicolas Beger, the Act4Europe campaign coordinator, organized lobbying training at the Network of Estonian Nonprofit Associations and Foundations summer school.

Inspired by the discourse at the conference, the Contact Group reoriented its activities. It was renamed the Estonian NGO Contact Group for Europe's Future and many active organizations, such as the Estonian Village Movement Kodukant and the Central Federation of Estonian Trade Unions, joined. The new objective became to monitor IC negotiations, and to inform the NGOs of this, and when possible, to present one's own commentaries. The IC started its work in Rome on October 4th, and by the summer of 2004, had given the European Constitutional Treaty its final form. The IC was much more closed than the Convention had been, whereby the Contact Group's primary function was to inform the NGOs of what occurred there.

For instance, the Contact Group took care that the principle of gender equality would find its rightful place in the Treaty, that the sustainable development protocol would be added to the Treaty, etc. In other words, the group was concerned that the high-sounding objectives that were enumerated at the beginning of Treaty would also be "interpreted" into the "correct" political mechanisms.

## CONTACT GROUP AND 2004

New topics were added in 2004.

*For instance, the big job in the spring was presenting our commentary for the document entitled “The Government’s European Policy 2004–2006”. The main emphasis of the commentary was that, along with a call for rapid economic growth, one should not forget the European Union’s social dimension, and the need to reduce inequality, as well as to attach importance to the role of civil society and local governments. The shaping of this document was a good example of cooperation between NGOs and the government.*

In the spring-summer, the European Parliament elections became important, in which Estonian citizens, as new European Union citizens, had the right to participate. Within the framework of the Contact Group, the Open Estonia Foundation supported the translation of the European Parliament Election Handbook into Estonian. This handbook contains information about what the European Parliament can/may do about many issues that are close to the heart of non-governmental organizations and it disseminated teaching about how to send so-called friendly EP delegates to the Parliament. As the next step, a connection was created with the candidates. On June 8th, a public hearing took place at the National Library with the candidates of the political parties represented in the Riigikogu, which was al-

so available on the Internet. The positions of the candidates regarding social and environmental issues, as well as development cooperation were examined. Questions were posed by Mall Hellam from the Open Estonia Foundation, Rein Ratas from the Estonian Society for Nature Protection, and Riina Kuusik from the Development Cooperation Roundtable.

Cooperation continued into the fall, when the working group of the Contact Group met with the European Parliament delegates that had been elected by that time (for instance, Tunne Kelam, Andres Tarand). In November, the working group of the Contact Group went to Brussels, where they met with the delegates in the European Parliament, but also the European Commissioner Siim Kallas, and workers at the Representation of Estonia to the European Union and NGO umbrella organizations.

At the same time, under the leadership of the Open Estonia Foundation, the working group of the Contact Group redirected their focus to the European Constitutional Treaty, because the project entitled “The European Constitutional Treaty and Participatory Democracy”, that was co-financed by the European Commission, was started up, the goal of which was to introduce the European Constitutional Treaty and to stimulate discussions about it. In October, events and debates took place on the topic of the article on participatory democracy, while the Charter of Fundamental Rights was under examination in November. Questions regarding the division of roles in the European Union, Europe’s social policies, and Europe’s role in the world were left to 2005.



COMPETITION MY EUROPE

# PROMETHEUS TRANSITIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAM

SIIRI MAIMETS, EUROCOLLEGE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

## CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION FOR THE TRANSMISSION OF DEMOCRATIC VALUES

Cross-border cooperation is a form of joint activity in which the organizations of various countries create a cooperation network in the name of common goals. In Estonia, both local governmental and non-profit organizations have actively participated.

In 2005–2006, the EuroCollege of the University of Tartu in cooperation with the Open Estonia Foundation implemented three cross-border projects, which were different in content, but in the end, served the same goals—to assist in the spread of democratic values and accelerate the transitional process in neighboring countries.

## HALF A YEAR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TARTU BECOMES A WAY OF THINKING

In 2005, with the support of the Open Estonia Foundation and the Lennart Meri Fund, the EuroCollege of the University of Tartu earmarked three full scholarships for bachelor's-level students from Ukraine so they could participate in the college's Prometheus Transitional Research Program during the 2006 spring semester. The interest in studying in Estonia turned out to be great—30 students with excellent study records and strong motivation participated in the competition. Studying among international students—who came from European Union member states, the United States,



STUDENTS ON AN EXCURSION  
TO ESTONIAN PARLIAMENT RIIGIKOGU

Turkey, Russia, Georgia, and Hong Kong—expanded the worldview of all the young people who participated. The knowledge of the Western students about Russia, Ukraine, and other transitional states was often superficial and stereotypical. Opportunities to converse, discuss, and pose questions added value to the academic part of the program. Ukraine was represented by students from both East (Donetsk) and West-Ukraine (Kiev), whose views are different. As a result of several debates, we saw previously deeply rooted and inflexible positions and assessments recede and be replaced by a wish to understand each other better. The students themselves thought this was very important, which was confirmed by the thoughts expressed in the students' final essays:

*"We had people from Western and Eastern Europe discussing together the issues of transition. It was very useful to know the Western approach—sometimes different from ours."*

*Another thing I discovered in Estonia was the people of my own country. Students who represented West and East of Ukraine were able to overcome stereotypes and national conflicts existing between them in order to spend time together. Meeting people from Kiev became really interesting for me."*

*"Having learnt different aspects of transition, as well as having assessed them from different*

*perspectives, the process of transition forms to a great extent a coherent picture in my head now.*

*Secondly, the environment of student variety and multitude has contributed even more to my deeper perception of political processes not only in the Baltics, but in the surrounding environment in general.*

*On the one hand, my personal horizons have broadened incredibly through communication with a great variety of students from unbelievably different backgrounds. Like an artist who tries to put different pieces of a mosaic into one piece of art, I was eagerly and gradually building up a coherent picture of events not only through the classroom chores, but also through informal international communication"*

*Providing scholarships for students from the former Republics of the Soviet Union is one way to help neighboring countries, which are standing at the same threshold that Estonia has already crossed.*

*Estonia's achievements and experiences provide an especially important opportunity for these young people to be persuaded, and to see with their own eyes, that social changes in the direction of democracy and a market economy are necessary and possible.*

Tartu played a large role in the shaping of the mindset of these young people and the making of their future decision. This is confirmed by the opinions of the students:

*"The Courses gave me a better understanding of the processes inside the European Union, showed the importance of memory and social capital in the society, raised questions about the best ways of nation-building."*

*"It is of extremely high importance for improving the knowledge of Ukrainian students, strengthening the scope of bilateral cooperation in research and different joint projects as well as contributing to the consolidation of European—i.e. democratic—values in my country."*

## PEOPLE CAN LEARN FROM ESTONIA'S EUROINTEGRATION EXPERIENCE

The training projects directed at the local government officials from the Chernigiv oblast in Ukraine was intended to introduce Estonia's experiences with integration into the European Union through reciprocal visits, and to provide the project participants with the opportunity to create new cooperation networks.

The most interesting topics were Estonia's EU accession negotiations, non-governmental organizations, and development of information technology, as well as the system of local government, especially the rights and obligations of the local governments and their financing.

The project was carried out in 2005 in cooperation with the Institute for Local Development of Chernigiv oblast. The Estonian delegation included representatives from the Euro-Region "Pskov-Livonia", the Peipsi Cooperation Center, and Estonian Nature Fund (all nonprofits) and the Valga County Local Government Association, Tõlliste, Sangaste, and Tapa Rural Municipalities, and Rural Municipality Governments of Valga County.

Intensive training cycles in Estonia and Ukraine included both academic lectures and practical presentations, discussion groups, visits to companies and organizations, roundtable discussions and cultural events. Of course, Estonia's experience with eurointegration also allows for a discussion of the mistakes that were made during the great whirl of accession. The participants appreciated the fact that these mistakes were referred to and suitable solutions offered to the cooperation partners during direct conversations.

There were plenty of ideas for joint activities on both sides. In the future, the "Pskov-



The EuroCollege of the University of Tartu continues to be interested in close cooperation related to transition and democracy research with the universities in the Chernigiv oblast, especially Nezin University. One of the most interesting research topics was how the former Soviet Republics perceive the Soviet period. There is mutual preparedness to continue EU-related training for local government officials in Ukraine.

On 5–6 May 2006, the EuroCollege of the University of Tartu organized an international research conference entitled “Promoting Democratic Values in the Enlarging Europe: The Changing Role of the Baltic States from Importers to Exporters”.

participated. With the support of the Open Estonia Foundation, Aliaksandr Lahvinets from Belarus (*European Humanities University International/Belarusian Robert Schuman Society, Belarus/Lithuania*) participated, whose presentation was titled "Europeanization Mechanism of Socialization as a Means of Exporting Democratic Values into Belarus".









**JEVGENI** SPEAKING AT A PROTEST IN SUPPORT OF FREE BELARUS IN TALLINN, PARK TAMMSAARE

cial stamp, which, naturally, politically disloyal people often do not receive, as was true of Estonia during the “golden Soviet period”.

At the same time, every day the state television (there is no private television) announces how pleasant and wonderful life is for all the citizens thanks to President Lukashenka, how the heroic combine operators in the kolkhozes of Soviet Belarus are battling for the harvest, and of course, how poor people are dying of hunger in capitalist and inhumane countries like Poland, Lithuania, England, Sweden, etc.

Starting in school, Belarusian children are taught that they live in a paradise, which is surrounded on all sides by enemies, and therefore, they must be especially watchful, not to “lose the great achievements of their fathers”. The “protection” of their state starts with semi-compulsory membership in the Youth Association of the Republic of Belarus and kindergarten-to-college political education, where smarter compatriots explain to the younger generation how clever their enemies actually are. Two years ago, a Presidential decree (other legislation, such as laws, are the exception rather than the rule in Belarus) established the position of “Deputy for Political Affairs” in all companies, including those based on private capital.

However, thanks to the fact that in the 21st century it is not possible to close off all information channels, and for instance, young people and active citizens can still gain access to independent and free sources of information (for instance, through the Internet), the political opposition in Belarus continues to operate. Still, it is very weak. Our experience shows

that every village society in Estonia, Latvia, or Lithuania can manage to build an organization, write projects, and recruit target groups, better than the largest non-governmental organizations in Belarus. They are just lacking the most elementary experience.

Nevertheless, there are plenty of courageous and enterprising people who are a quick study! It is important to provide them with the necessary training and support so they can better do their work in Belarus. Furthermore, the interest in the experiences of Estonian organizations is very great! Opportunities for contacts are sought not only with local youth and political organizations, but with those who operate at the local level—those who not only operate on paper, but with definite people in definite fields of activity. Even our folk culture societies could introduce their activities to their Belarusian colleagues, because during Lukashenka’s term of office, only a few Belarusian-language schools remain in Minsk and there too, some instruction is in Russian.

A Belarusian support group operates in Estonia, which coordinates the non-governmental organizations and private individuals who constantly cooperate with Belarus. The objective of the support group is to publicize the situation in Belarus, to better inform the Estonian society, and to encourage Estonian organizations to cooperate with Belarusian non-governmental organizations. Familiarize yourself with the activities of the support group at <http://valgevene.city.ee> and join these activities!

*Now it is our turn to help others!*

# THE 2004 UKRAINIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS: THE FIRST ELECTION- OBSERVATION MISSION BY ESTONIAN NGOS

TÕNIS LEHT, OEF OBSERVER IN UKRAINE 2004

In free societies, election results are determined by the people, while in authoritarian states, elections are primarily a show to create a democratic façade and the results are determined by those in power. Seldom do the election results also directly affect election observers. In the presidential elections that took place in Ukraine in the fall-winter of 2004, the observers had a key role to play.

Besides everything else, the Ukrainian elections were special because an Estonian NGO observation mission participated for the first time in a foreign election. The Open Estonia Fund sponsored 16 people to go to Ukraine as members of the ENEMO East-European observation network. Previously, observers from Estonia had participated only under the auspices of OSCE and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; a score of Estonians also participated this time in Ukraine as part of the OSCE team. The OEF initiative showed that it is possible to observe elections abroad without state support and

that the observers need not be members of the Riigikogu or representatives of state institutions. Despite our small numbers, the activity of the Estonian observers did not go unnoticed and our observers played an important part in highlighting violations.

It was the information from independent observation missions and exit polls that became the spark that lit the flame of the Orange Revolution and gave the Ukrainian people the opportunity to topple the power of corrupt oligarchs.

On the night of November 21st, the exit pollsters announced a result of 52% for the western-minded Viktor Yushchenko and 43% for the favorite of the then current regime, Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych. However, the official preliminary results confirmed a victory for Yanukovych by 2.5%.

The attempt by the authorities to falsify the election results quickly failed. By the evening of Election Day, the central election commission had announced that voter turnout was uniformly 78–80% across Ukraine. In the results announced the next morning, the voter turnout in the Donetsk region had mysteriously jumped from 78% to 96.2%, and the percentage of participation in Lugansk had risen from 80% to 89% during the night. In both regions, over 90% of the voters voted for Yanukovich. The nocturnal manipulations added 1.2 million new votes, of which 90% were assigned to Yanukovich, which in turn sufficed to achieve a 2.5% advantage.

Throughout the Election Day, the more than ten thousand domestic and foreign poll watchers made notification of massive violations. Tens of thousands of “assembly-line” voters were transported by bus and train from one precinct to another, in order to vote in several precincts as voters that were away from their home precinct. The “typo” by the central election commission and the massive, registered violations gave the mass protest that started the morning after the elections a strong legal basis. The Orange Revolution that lasted for weeks forced the Ukrainian Parliament and Supreme Court to declare the election results invalid and to announce a third round of

OEF GAVE THE CONCORD PRIZE OF 2005  
TO THE CHAIRWOMAN OF UKRAINIAN CONGRESS, **VIRA KONŌK**







voting. Many of the violations recorded by the ENEMO, and especially by Estonian observers, were read out in the Parliament.

The Estonian ENEMO observers operated in the Dnipropetrovsk oblast, where, along with many smaller problems, more serious violations of election procedures were recorded. For instance, in many precincts the seals on the voting boxes were broken before the vote counting started, and in one precinct, a voter discovered that a ballot had previously been given out in his name and apparently already used for voting. In addition to specific violations, many people around the precincts charged that they had been forced to vote for Yanukovych. Great pressure was applied in a hospital precinct, where threats were made to discontinue treatment in the case of a "wrong" vote.

During the repeat round, the number of election observers was exceptionally large. Over 12,000 foreign observers from all corners of the world set a world record in this field. In addition to the foreign observers, an equal number of the representatives of both candidates were present at the majority of the precincts along with independent domestic observers. The falsification of election results was made considerably more difficult.

The results of the third round were clear—Yushchenko received 52% and Yanukovych 44% of the votes. Due to the openness of the late election round and international pressure, Viktor Yanukovych was forced to admit defeat and temporarily retire from the political arena. The Estonian observers also noticed violations in the last round, but they were mostly technical mistakes and deliberate falsifications were not noticed.

In the democratization of authoritarian countries, elections are the best opportunity to expose the deceitfulness of the ruling circles to the people, and to involve the people in stepping forward in the name of democratic change. The independent information of the poll watchers about violations and the apparent actual election results are the alternatives that give democratically minded forces the right to come out on the streets and demand change. The Ukrainian Orange Revolution is a vivid example of this scenario. Unfortunately, no revolution, regardless of its color, can guarantee a straight line to a mature democracy, and the development of Ukraine after the revolution has been zigzagged. The end result of its development is not at all clear.

# OPEN ESTONIA FOUNDATION HIGHLIGHTS 2001–2006

*States have no principles but democratic states are responsive to the wishes of their citizens. If the citizens have principles, they can impose them on their governments. What are the principles that would promote freedom, democracy, and the rule of law? Those are the principles of open society.*

*George Soros*

## 2001

- » The 2nd Estonian Conference and Fair for NGOs entitled "From Vision to Change" takes place.
- » Estonian Television airs a series of programs entitled "The Third Sector".
- » The OEF supports the publication of the Estonian Human Development Report.
- » The cooperation program between the Open Estonia Foundation and the State Chancellery for raising public awareness about the European Union is launched.
- » The OEF and BAPP contribute to the development of the Estonian Civil Society Development Concept (EKAK).

## 2002

- » The survey entitled "Digital Gap in Estonia and Ways to Overcome It" shows that 400,000 Estonian citizens do not consider the Internet useful.
- » The 4th Open Society Forum, entitled "The Challenges of Globalization", creates a lively public debate in the society.
- » An allocation of 888,182 EEK is made for the methadone treatment of drug addicts.
- » A report entitled *EU Enlargement Monitoring: Equal Opportunities for Men and Women* is published.
- » The Estonian Civil Society Contact Group for the Convention on the Future of Europe is published.
- » BAPP supports the establishment of the Viljandi County Community Fund, the first community foundation in Estonia.
- » At the initiative of the OEF a series of public seminars, entitled "Stories of Europe's Future", are held.
- » The OEF supports a documentary by Jaak Kilmi and Andres Maimik on gender issues – *The Beauty of the Fatherland*.



## 2003

- » The OEF launches a study on family violence and prostitution.
- » With the support of the Foundation, the Contact Group actively comments on the draft of European Union Constitutional Treaty and meets frequently with the Estonian representatives to the Convention on the Future of Europe.
- » The Contact Group participates in the Act4Europe campaign to amend the article on participatory democracy in the draft of the Constitutional Treaty.
- » The Third Estonian Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations entitled "Good Governance" takes place.
- » The OEF, in cooperation with the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organizes "The World of Partnerships: Development Cooperation in New Europe" Conference.
- » The BAPP issues a call for proposals to introduce the Concept of the Development of Estonian Civil Society and the code of ethics of the Estonian NGOs.
- » With the support of the OEF, two books on feminism are published: *With and without John: Recipes from Estonian Feminists* and academic and introductory study materials entitled *Keywords: Ten Steps to a Feminine Study*.

## 2004

- » The OEF translates the NGO toolkit for European Parliament elections into Estonian.
- » At the initiative of the Foundation, a meeting is organized between candidates for Member of the European Parliament member (MEP) and NGO representatives entitled "Citizens' Europe". MEP candidates answer questions in the field of social affairs, environmental and developmental cooperation, and the meeting is aired over the Internet.
- » The project entitled "The European Constitutional Treaty and Participatory Democracy" is launched with co-funding from the European Commission. During the year, roundtables and seminars are held on the topic of the Constitutional Treaty.
- » At the invitation of MEP Andres Tarand, the OEF organizes a trip to Brussels for 20 journalists and representatives of civil society to learn about EU institutions.
- » The OEF supports the development of gender studies at the University of Tartu and the publication of the gender-related scientific magazine *Ariadne's Thread*.
- » The OEF supports the development of cooperation networks of medical personnel, social workers and policemen for assisting victims of family violence.
- » On the basis of the study entitled "Involvement in the Decision-Making Process" conducted by the OEF and Praxis, the State Chancellery begins to prepare good practices for involving the public and non-governmental organizations in the decision-making process.
- » The OEF sends representatives of Estonian civil society to monitor the Ukrainian presidential elections in Dnipropetrovsk.

## 2005

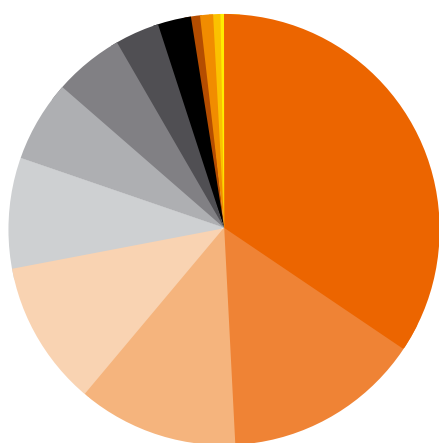
- » The year 2005 is declared the European Year of Citizenship through Education, and the OEF actively participates in the events.
- » Policy analysis training is organized for non-governmental organizations and think tanks.

- » Research and study materials entitled “Gender in TV Programming” are prepared. These materials analyze the depiction of men and women on television, and have the goal of setting the production of better quality programming.
- » Mall Hellam, Director of the Open Estonia Foundation, is named EU Lobby Citizen of the Year.
- » The President of Georgia initiates the Dear Leap Program, which, following the example of the Estonian Tiger Leap Program, promotes the use of the Internet and computers in education. The project supported by the Open Estonia Foundation and the Estonian Foreign Ministry is carried out by the E-State Academy.
- » The main speaker at the 10th Open Society Forum, entitled “Where Does Europe End” is Jeremy Rifkin.
- » The Estonian Village Movement Kodukant and the OEF/BAPP initiate a pre-election citizenship training series entitled “The Significance of the Vote”.
- » With the support of the Open Estonian Foundation, the foundation is established for recognizing the “Volunteer of the Year”.
- » In cooperation with the British Embassy, a roundtable takes place on sharing democratic experiences with neighboring countries of the European Union.
- » Representatives of Belarusian non-governmental organizations observe the local government elections in Estonia.
- » With the support of the Baltic-American Partnership Program, the Center for Civil Society Study and Development is established at Tallinn University.
- » The first comprehensive review of kinship violence based on police statistics is published.
- » The tradition of celebrating a Belarus Solidarity Day is started in Estonia.

## 2006

- » The 11th Open Society Forum, entitled “Social Capital in a Changing World” takes place; the main speaker is Robert D. Putnam.
- » Police instructions for the resolution of kinship violence cases are completed, which are implemented throughout Estonia.
- » Organized by the OEF, representatives of Estonian non-governmental organizations observe the presidential elections in Belarus.
- » The Belarusian support group starts up. At its suggestion, the Estonian Government supports the studies in Estonia of ten Belarusian students, who have been expelled from university in Belarus.
- » With the support of the OEF, a special film program dealing with authoritarian societies, entitled “Closed Societies” is screened at the Black Nights Film Festival.
- » A report entitled “Democracy and National Interests” is issued by the Estonian Open Society Institute in cooperation with social scientists and the OEF. This is the first comprehensive assessment of the quality of democracy in Estonia.
- » With the support of the OEF, the following books are published: *Feminist Debates: A Philosophical Exchange of Ideas* and *Why Does He Do that? How Angry and Controlling Men Think*.
- » With the support of the OEF, a foundation is established for recognizing social enterprises.
- » The BAPP supports research on the media consumption of young people, through which it becomes clear that Estonian schoolchildren are well equipped with computers, rate their technological skills highly, and are less critical of the Internet than their contemporaries elsewhere in Europe.
- » The OEF supports a study that analyzes the impact of the new member states on the eastwardly directed policies of the European Union. A roundtable entitled “Do the New Ones Have an Effect?”
- » The BAPP organized a competition entitled “School as the Center of Local Life”, for cooperative projects between schools and non-governmental organizations.
- » The Federation of Estonian Student Unions chooses the BAPP as the most student-friendly organization in the development of activities related to student bodies.

# OPEN ESTONIA FOUNDATION EXPENDITURES (IN EEK)



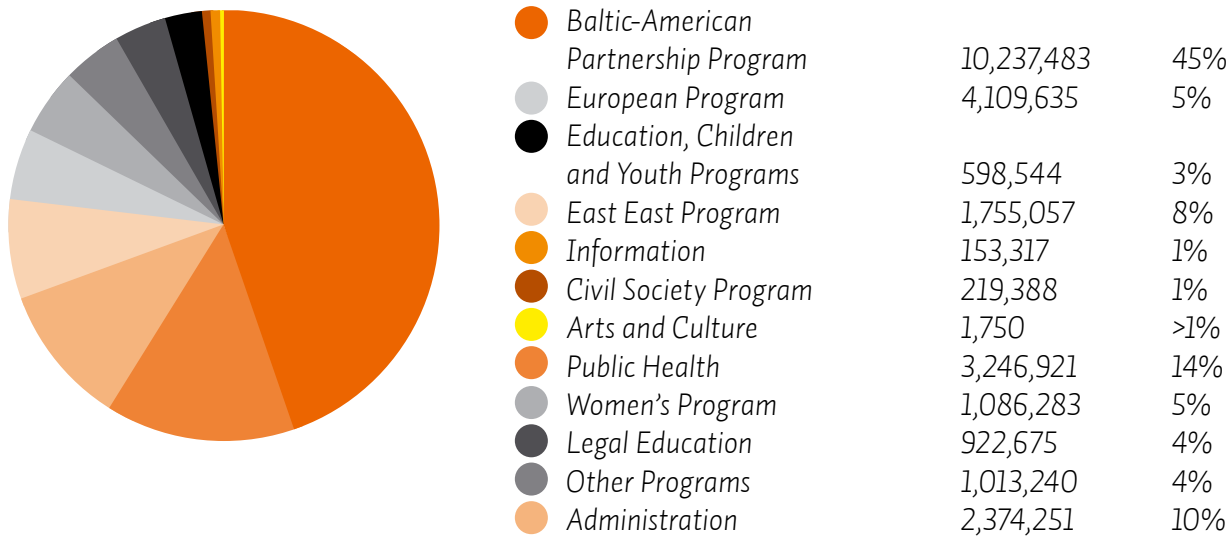
EXPENDITURES OF 2001

Public Administration	140,298	1%
Baltic-American Partnership Program	9,171,252	35%
European Program	3,888,171	15%
Education, Children and Youth Programs	3,180,661	12%
East East Program	2,145,261	8%
Information	54,303	>1%
Civil Society Program	600,761	2%
Arts and Culture	198,900	1%
Public Health	1,631,288	6%
Women's Program	1,419,410	5%
Legal Education	259,051	3%
Other Programs	923,711	3%
Administration	2,902,867	11%

**2001 IN TOTAL**

**26,515,934**

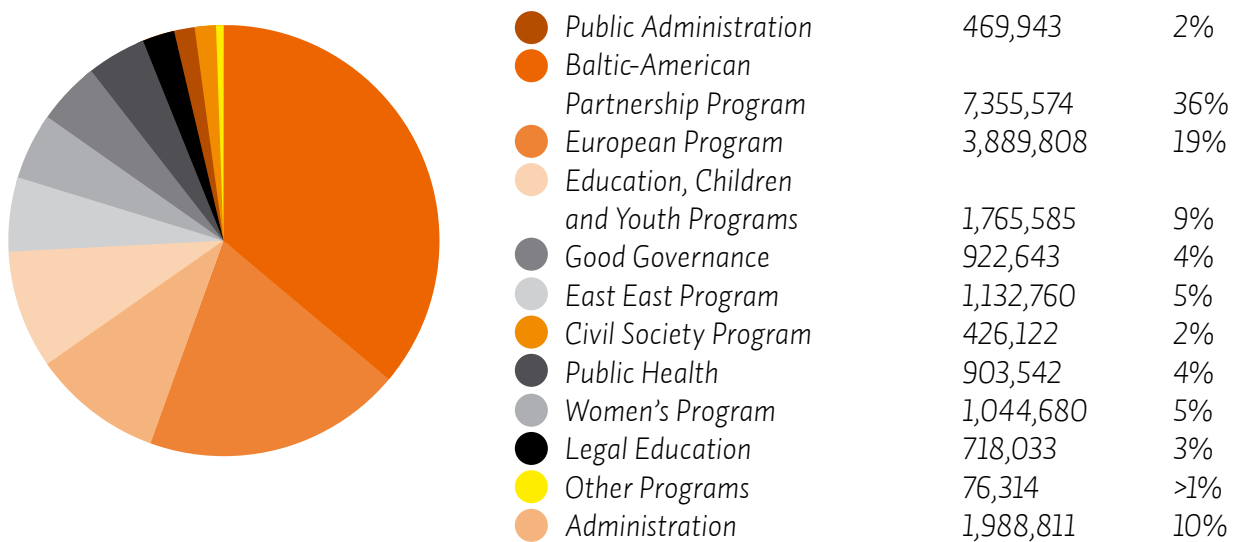
## EXPENDITURES OF 2002



2002 IN TOTAL

25,718,544

## EXPENDITURES OF 2003



2003 IN TOTAL

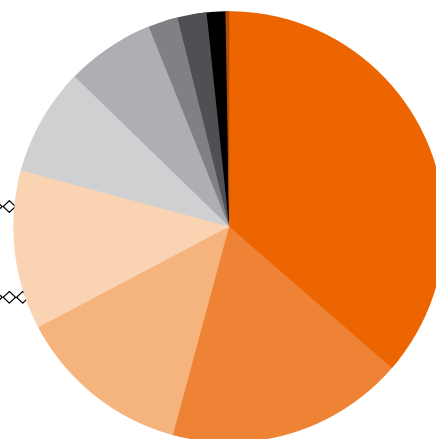
20,693,815

## EXPENDITURES OF 2004

● Baltic-American Partnership Program	6,027,260	36%
● European Program	2,972,834	18%
● Education, Children and Youth Programs	252,545	2%
● Good Governance	2,120,939	13%
● East East Program	1,325,232	8%
● Civil Society Program	363,242	2%
● Public Health	378,766	2%
● Women's Program	1,086,152	7%
● Other Programs	6827	>1%
● Administration	2,002,120	12%

**2004 IN TOTAL**

**16,535,917**

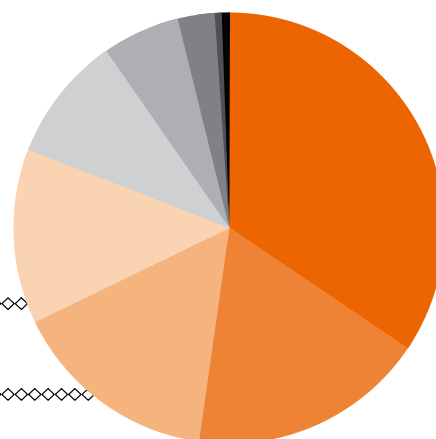


## EXPENDITURES OF 2005

● Baltic-American Partnership Program	6,335,911	35%
● European Program	3,265,579	18%
● Education, Children and Youth Programs	500,834	3%
● Good Governance	2,828,439	15%
● East East Program	1,759,417	10%
● Public Health	133,656	1%
● Women's Program	1,040,909	6%
● Other Programs	64,632	>1%
● Administration	2,366,056	13%

**2005 IN TOTAL**

**18,295,433**



**18,835,540**