

People's Assembly:
**The Estonian case of crowdsourcing:
e-democracy for
political transparency**

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What are we talking about?

In today's democracy mechanisms you only know the majority interest above silent interests.

(Ben Horowitz, venture capitalist)

Ideally you would like to see political groups competing in the most open, transparent fashion, not to abuse their special position as googles of this world.

(Garri Kasparov, chess-player and political activist)

Estonian context in open government

- secure online access to personal and public government data
- low bureaucracy + good IT skills to get things done
- Vibrant civil society, e.g. participation in voluntary work and crowdfunding
- General trust in government-provided systems
 - E-voting has taken place on 8 elections,
over 30% of all votes were digital in 2015



Triggers for Assembly process

- Street demonstrations and keen media coverage
- Petition collects 17,000 signatures
- Public resentment and mistrust towards all politicians; disengagement from party politics
- Investigation by the Prosecutor's Office on several cases of illegitimate donations

Side effect: donations to Reform party decline

President calls for civic participation

Five main issues outlined at stakeholder meeting, called upon by the President:

- Barriers to political movements
- Financing and financial reporting of political parties
- Public participation in policy making
- Electoral system regulation
- Political patronage and corruption

Teamwork by civic activists: building the process for crowdsourcing

- Phase 1: 6,000 proposals and comments submitted online
- Phase 2: collating and analysis of web content
- Phase 3: impact assessment and expert opinion on proposed amendments
- Phase 4: stakeholder deliberation on main 5 issues
- Phase 5: grass-root participation, Deliberation Day
314 participants or 62% of recruited sample select proposals to be sent to the Parliament

Deliberation Day



Role of the Parliament

- President hands over all proposals created in deliberation process
- Parliament Constitutional Committee deliberates
- Parliament fractions form their opinion on proposals
- Committee starts drafting legislative changes
- Committee fails in its communication about the process

Direct results 1 year after

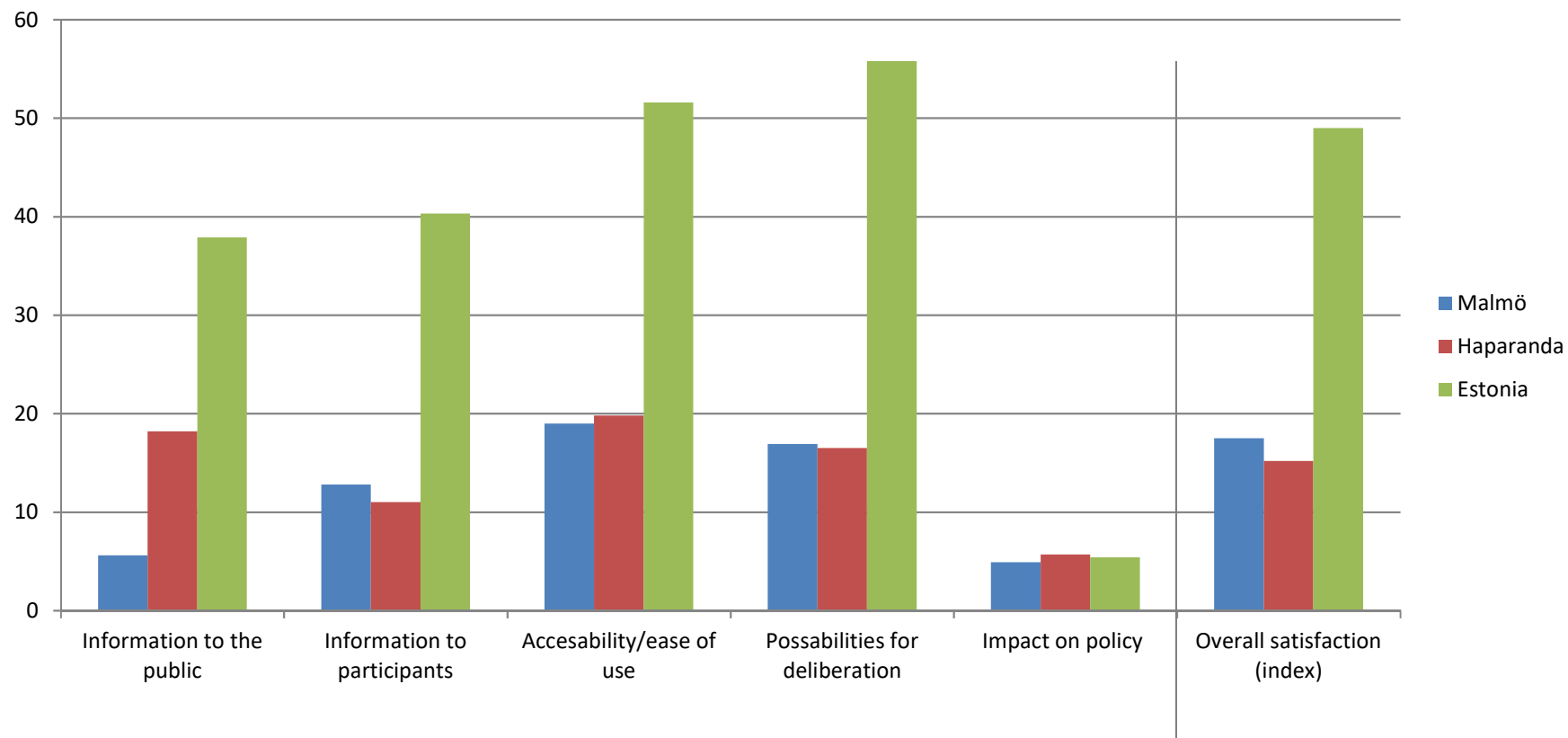
Out of final 15 proposals, 3 have made their way into legislation + 4 have been partially adopted

Civic participation found its place in political agenda

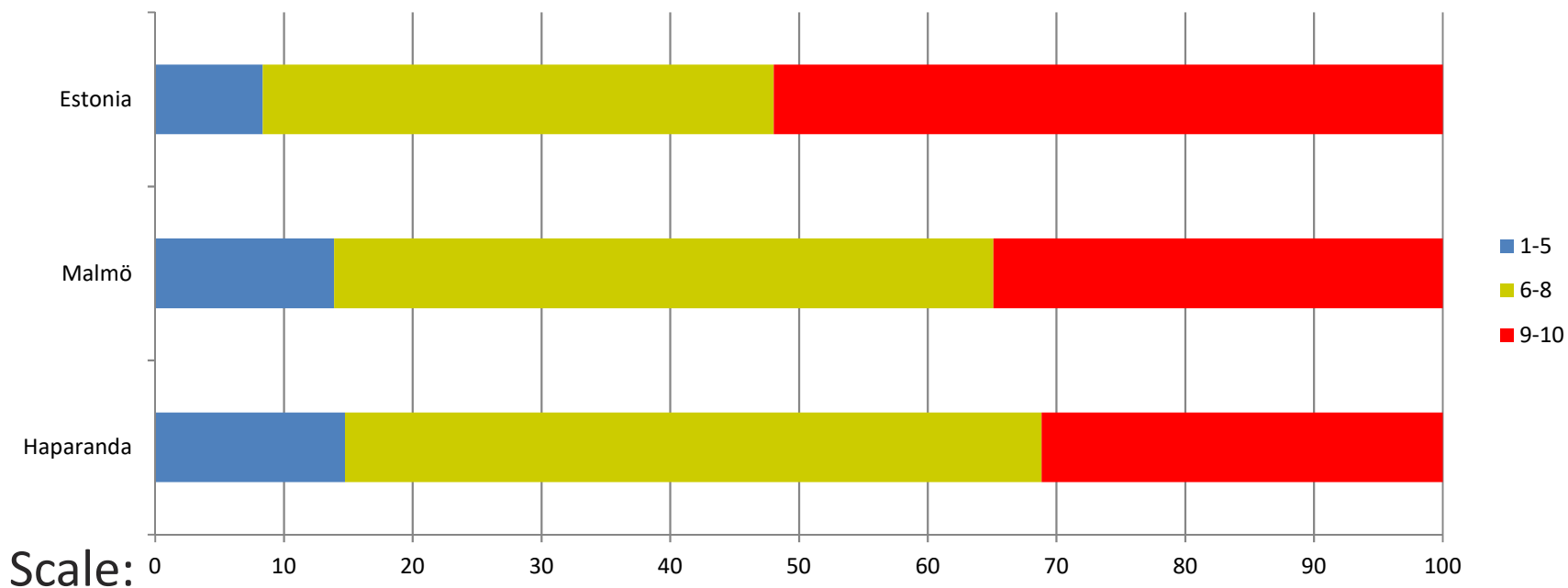
- **Legal act adopted for popular initiatives and presenting collective petitions to Parliament**
- The amount of financing from the state budget to the political parties that did not meet the election threshold was increased
- A monetary fine was imposed for accepting prohibited donations.
- The power of the Political Party Funding Supervision Committee to check the finances of parties was increased

Evaluation of the participation process

Share of participants who were satisfied with the process. Comparison of petitioning in Swedish cities and Assembly (Surveys by Örebro University and Praxis)



Attitudes towards citizen participation



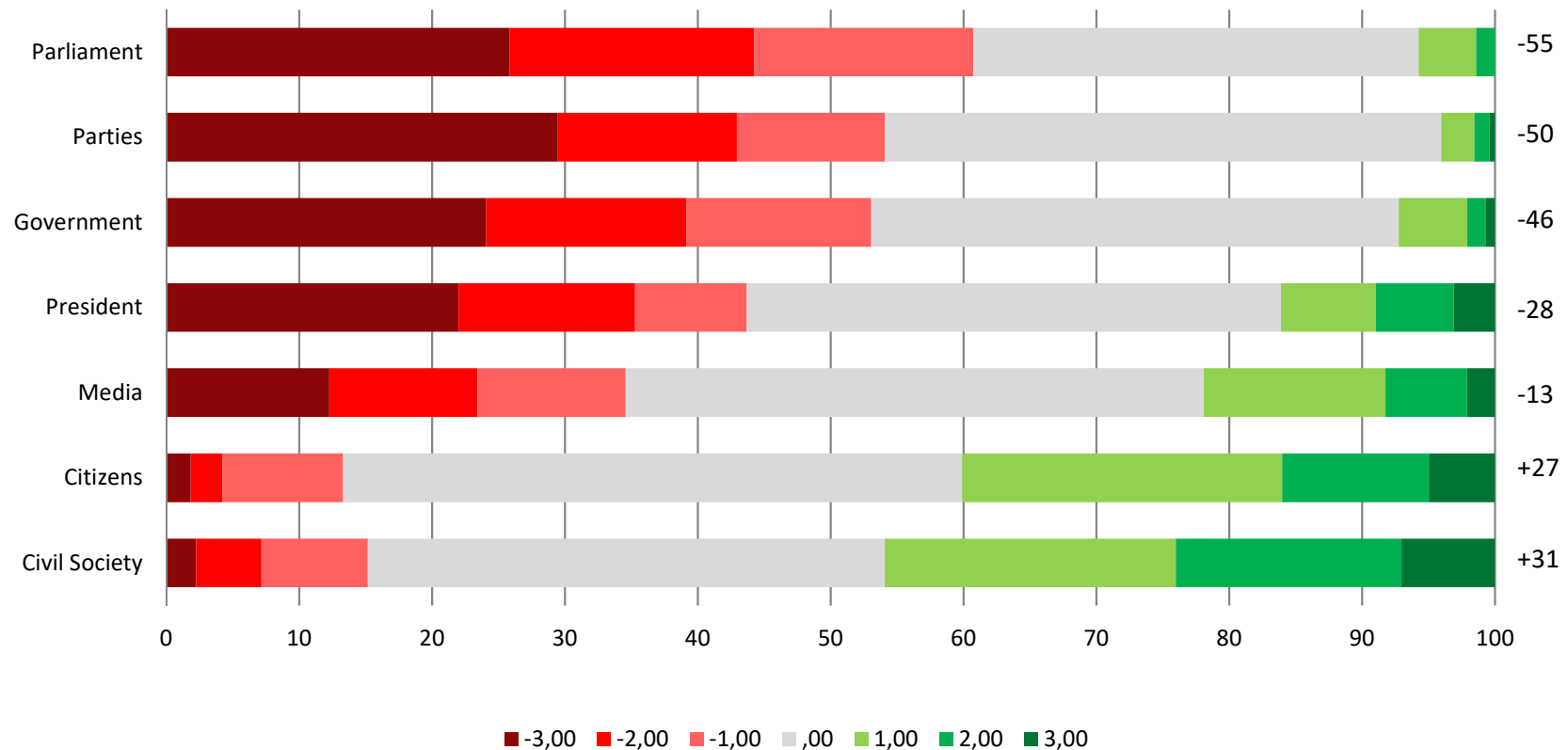
Scale:

1-5 Citizens should have less or the same level of influence on political decisions

6-10. Citizens should have more influence on political decisions

Change in trust vs social capital

- Decreasing trust for institutions
- Increasing trust for citizens and civil society



Effects on political landscape

- The first crowd-sourced law was adopted, based on collective petitioning to Parliament
- Two new parties gained from Assembly proposals and were elected to Parliament
 - lower mandatory deposit for setting up candidates, parties saved 50,000 EUR
 - only 500 members are required to form a Party, instead of previous 1000 persons

Welcome to the home of citizen initiatives!

Do you feel like some things could be done better in Estonia? Or that some regulations could be changed? Rahvaalgatus.ee enables you to compile and send collective addresses - with at least 1000 digital signatures - to the parliament of Estonia. Also, you can follow whether your proposal will be turned into draft act.



YOU CAN MAKE PROPOSALS TO THE ESTONIAN PARLIAMENT THROUGH RAHVAALGATUS.EE (VIDEO)

[CREATE AN INITIATIVE >](#)

IN PROGRESS

11/29/2016

Ei ole vaja sotsiaaltoetuste süsteemi, kui on kodaniku palk. Ka mina olen kodanik, küll sant. Saan...

Mait Jõe

6 days left

09/07/2016

Nullkodakondsus 2,0

Natalja Kitam

Discussion finished

06/11/2016

Kuidas paremini arutleda

Taivo Pungas

Discussion finished

03/11/2016

Hädakaitse piiri ületamise eest pole vaja karistada

Taru Mõniste

03/09/2016

Sotsiaalmaksu seaduse muutmise viimaks maksu arvestamise kuupõhiselt tunnipõhiseks.

Ain Mõniste

Criteria for evaluating the process

- Do all stakeholders perceive the nature of the problem in similar way?
- Are the participants and main stakeholders motivated to take part in the process?
- Was the media involved in discussing the issues?
- Did the deliberation and public discussion provide a common space for argumentation
- Does the deliberation process propose solutions to the original problem?

Deliberation topics

- The original problem must be real, an issue of importance in the given context.
- The problem must be in public interest, not a cause for a single advocacy group
- The problem must be presented in a clear way, as objectively as possible
- Deliberation is not a poll or referendum: the question is „How?“, not just „What do you prefer?“

Legitimacy of the crowdsourcing process

- **The aim is to form a common understanding of possible solutions to a problem.**
- All proposals and feedback are made public. It is possible to track the initial proposals through deliberation stages: the analysis, synthesis, and other modification of initial input is made public and explained
- The core team of organisers, the funding structure and the decision makers are made transparent