

# Delegation Brandenburg on the topic 'Sustainable development within the framework of Saksa Kevad'

## Report on the fact-finding mission to Estonia from 18 - 20 September 2024

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Our fact-finding trip to Estonia from 18 to 20 September 2024 provided us with a comprehensive insight into the country's approach to sustainability. We explored various sectors, including science, public administration, non-governmental organisations, and business. The meetings focused not only on sustainability but also referred to digitalisation—a field in which Estonia is a recognised pioneer. The visit highlighted how Estonia uses digitalisation to advance its sustainability goals.

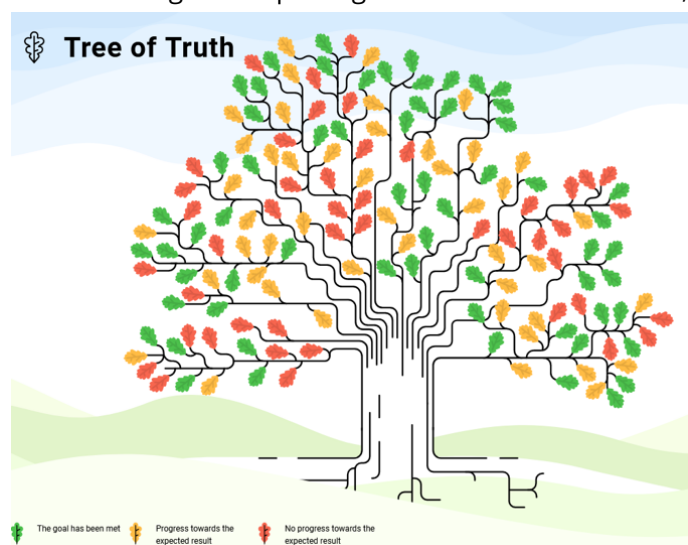
One notable observation throughout the meetings was the many similarities between Estonia and Brandenburg. Like Brandenburg, Estonia is sparsely populated and undergoing structural transformation, particularly as it phases out fossil fuels. Estonia's strategy involves diversifying its industrial base in Ida-Viru, the easternmost region bordering Russia. This regional transformation aims to counteract depopulation and an ageing population—challenges that Brandenburg faces in some areas as well.

However, Estonia shows a stark contrast in terms of digital administration. In Estonia, 99% of all administrative processes can be completed online, with only a few requiring visits to offices or printed documents. Nonetheless, traditional methods remain available. To ensure everyone has access to digital administration, free courses are provided. In this respect Estonia serves as a role model, offering lessons from which not only Brandenburg could benefit.

Estonia also demonstrates considerable progress in the use of indicators to evaluate public services. The website "My Municipality" (a loose translation) provides residents with systematic information on the state of public services in their municipalities, evaluated against hundreds of criteria. The "Tree of Truth" uses traffic light-coloured leaves to visualise the performance of services across areas such as healthcare, public transport, environment and climate, participation and accessibility, culture, sports and many more. The data-driven insights benefit all Estonians and are widely used, influencing electoral campaigns, and equipping the media with a robust foundation for investigative reporting. The richness of the data, the engaging presentation, and accessibility to the public are impressive, offering a level of data transparency that Estonians take for granted but which remains aspirational for Brandenburg and Germany.

A similar system for presenting various indicators related to sustainability, as well as climate protection and adaptation, could be highly effective for Brandenburg.

The exchange with Estonia on sustainability and digitalisation was profoundly inspiring. It has provided new perspectives that will continue to shape both my professional and personal outlook in the years to come.



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