

# **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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1. Intensive Programme. The itinerary was packed with discussion partners and diverse topics, facilitating lively and substantive exchanges between the German delegation and their Estonian counterparts.
2. The German Embassy provided exceptional preparation and support, ensuring the trip's success.
3. Introduction at the German Embassy: A significant overlap in the mentality of Estonians and Brandenburgers (e.g., regarding clarity, reliability, and trust in state structures) facilitated effective communication.
4. **E-Estonia Briefing Centre:** Digitalisation has simplified many processes in Estonia, with data protection risks considered manageable (no major data breaches have been reported to date). The system's principle of granting all authorised users access to the same digital document without re-creating it saves time and enhances transparency. Data is stored in a decentralized manner, and the state actively provides all services to its citizens, with the exceptions of marriage and divorce.
5. **Tallinn University:** Sustainability is less prominent within Estonian civil society. However, government documents on the topic have evolved since the sustainability debate initiated by Sweden in the 1990s. An 18th sustainability goal addressing the cultural dimension of sustainability was added, reflecting Estonian society's strong sense of community.
6. **Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture, and Ministry of Climate**
  - Estonia features a strong central administration, while its regional and municipal levels have limited powers, particularly in the area of taxation.
  - The long-term development strategy "Estonia 2035" consolidates all strategic priorities, including seventeen sector-specific plans such as the Green Reform Action Plan 2023–2025.
  - Green public procurement accounted for 16 % of total public procurement costs in 2022. Targets are set at 25 % by 2025 and 50 % by 2035, with specific regulations already in place for certain product groups.
  - In 2023, 53 % of Estonia's electricity was generated from renewable sources, with a target of 100 % by 2035.
  - The "Tree of Truth" initiative tracks over seven hundred sustainability indicators across all municipalities. The indicators are widely used by civil society, public administration, politics, and the media.

7. **Ida-Virumaa Region:** The region faces significant challenges due to structural changes stemming from the end of oil shale extraction—a transformation considerably more impactful than Brandenburg's coal phase-out.
8. **Estonian Leader Union:** Exemplary sustainability projects in Leader regions, such as food sharing, furniture reuse, and textile recycling.
9. **Tallinn City Administration:** The city is strongly committed to sustainability, particularly in the areas of mobility and transport, construction and housing, energy, and biodiversity. However, free public transport for Tallinn residents continues to be a subject of ongoing debate.
10. **Rohetiiger (Green Tiger):** The networking platform, primarily for environmentally conscious companies, includes almost one hundred members. It has developed five sector roadmaps—energy, construction, transport, land use, industry, and circular economy—and adopted an ambitious Action Plan 2040.