



# Electoral system and policy-making culture in Estonia

Liia Hänni

Senior Expert on e-Democracy

# Liia Hänni

- 1970 – 1990 Researcher on Astrophysics
- 1990 – 1992 Member of the Supreme Council
  - 1991 – 1992 Member of the Constitutional Assembly
- 2003 Member of the Riigikogu
  - 1992 – 1995 Minister of Reforms
- 2004 – Senior Expert on e-Democracy





# Topics

- Basics of the Estonian electoral system
- Outcome of the 2023 Riigikogu elections
- Government formation process
- Course of coalition negotiations
- Role of citizens in policy making





# Electoral system in Estonia

- 101 MPs
- Voting age from 18 years
- Candidates age from 21 years
- Proportional representation with 5% threshold
- 12 electoral districts with open lists
- Submission of candidates by political parties, citizen himself/herself
- Voting by paper ballots and online (i-voting)





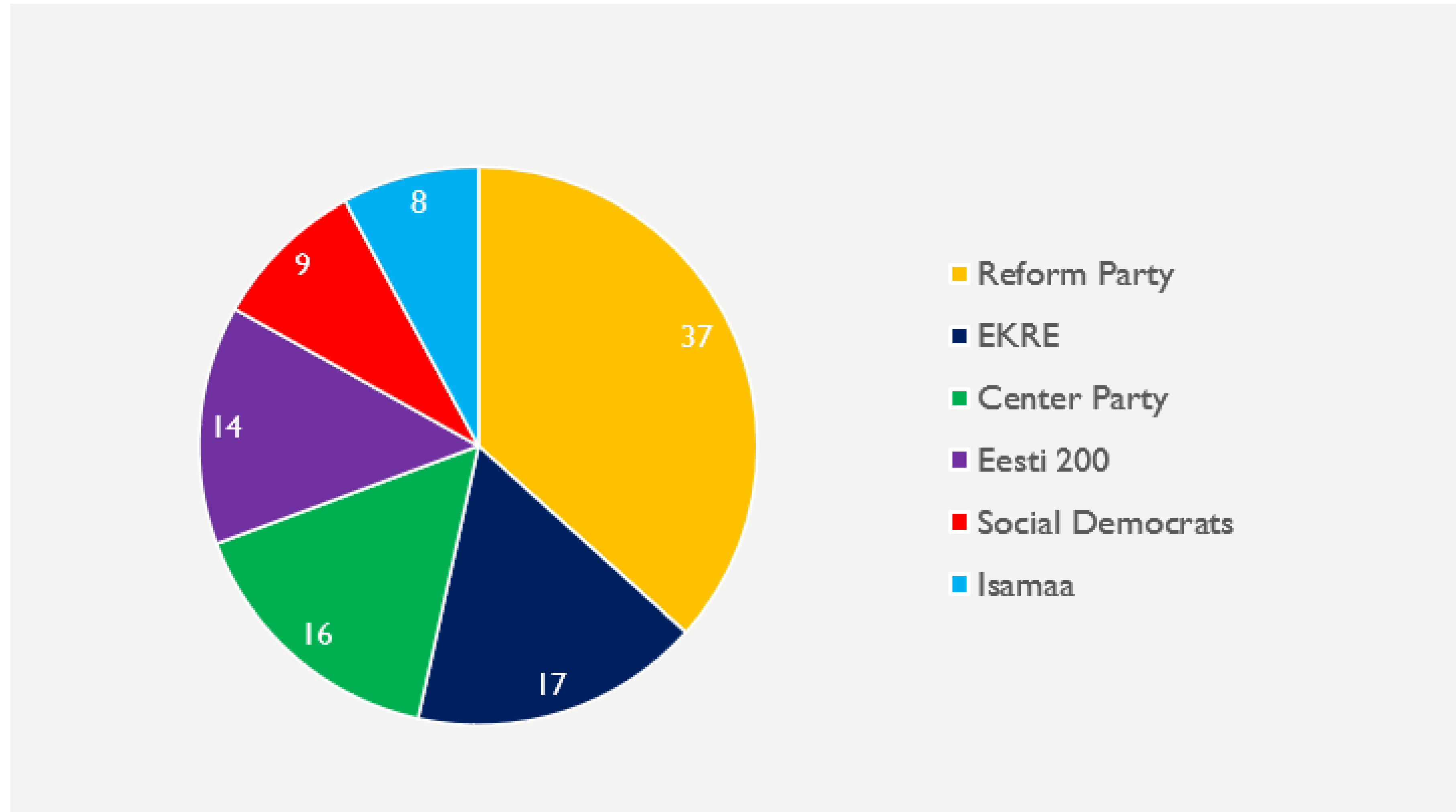
# Statistics

- 966 129 voters in the list
- 615 009 voted
- 301495 voted with a paper ballot
- 313 514 voted online
- **Turnout 63.7%**
- 9 political parties presented lists of candidates
- 968 candidates

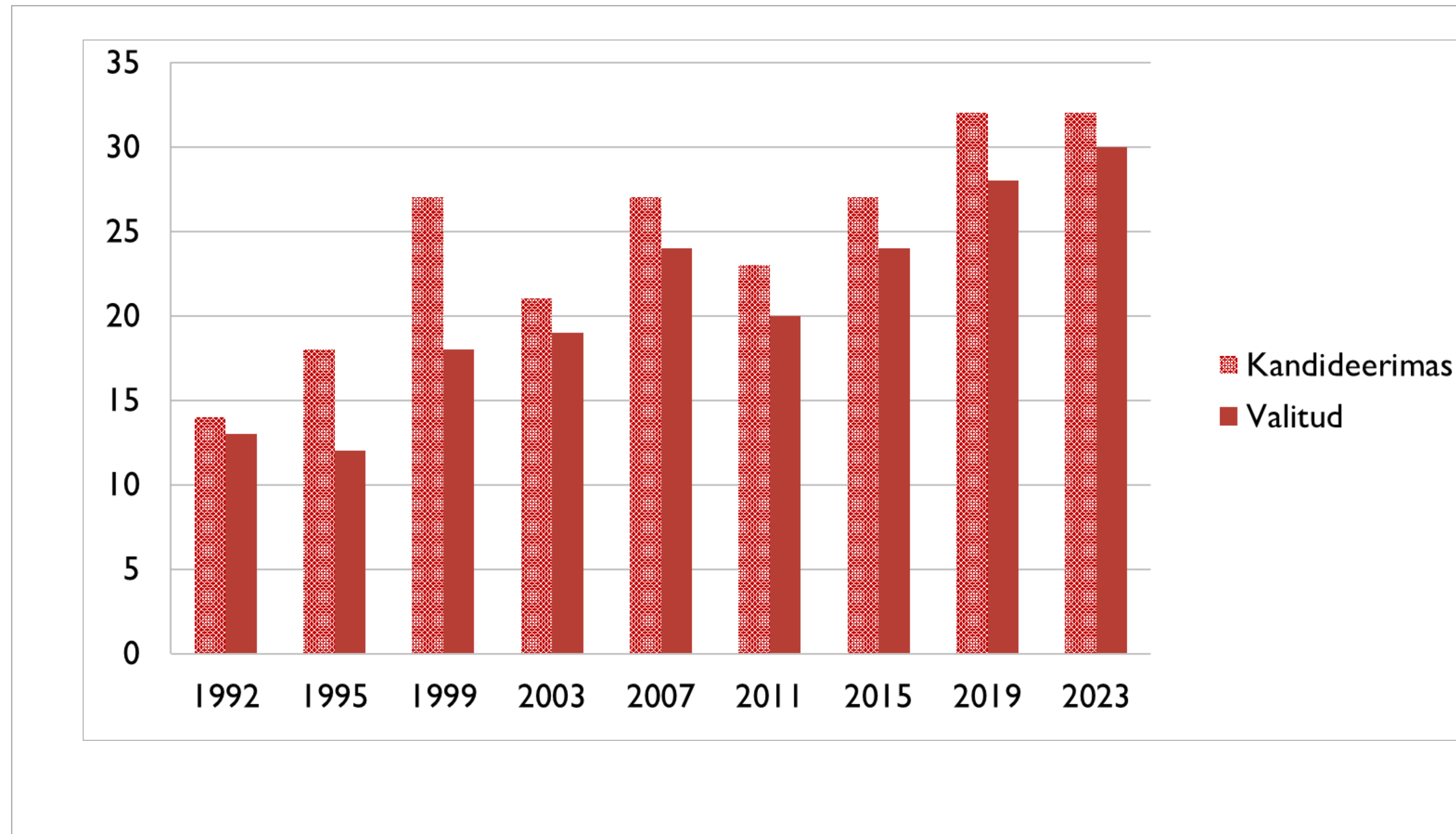
March 5<sup>th</sup> 2023



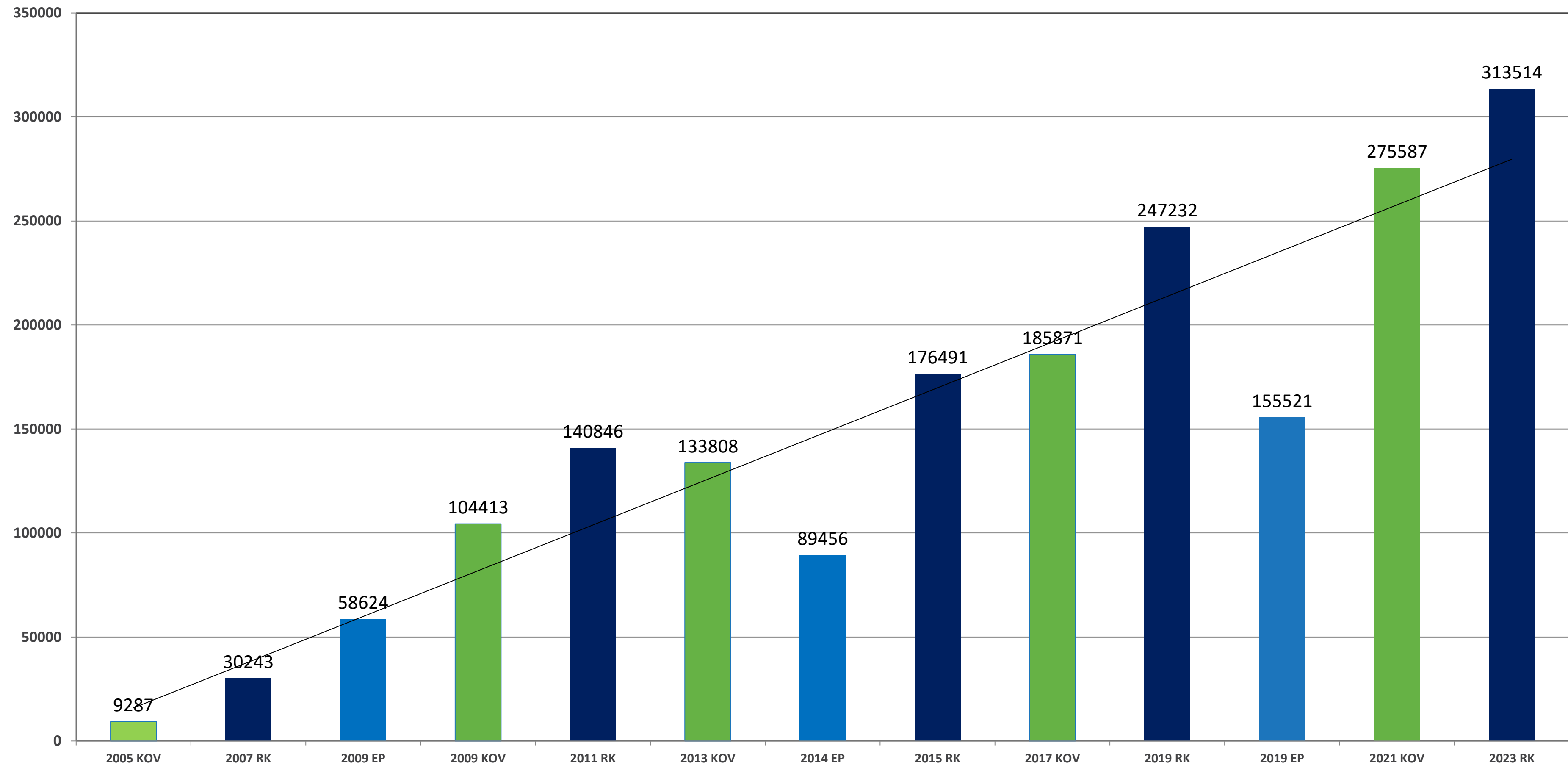
# Political composition of the Riigikogu 2023



# Women in Riigikogu elections



# Progress of i-voting in Estonia



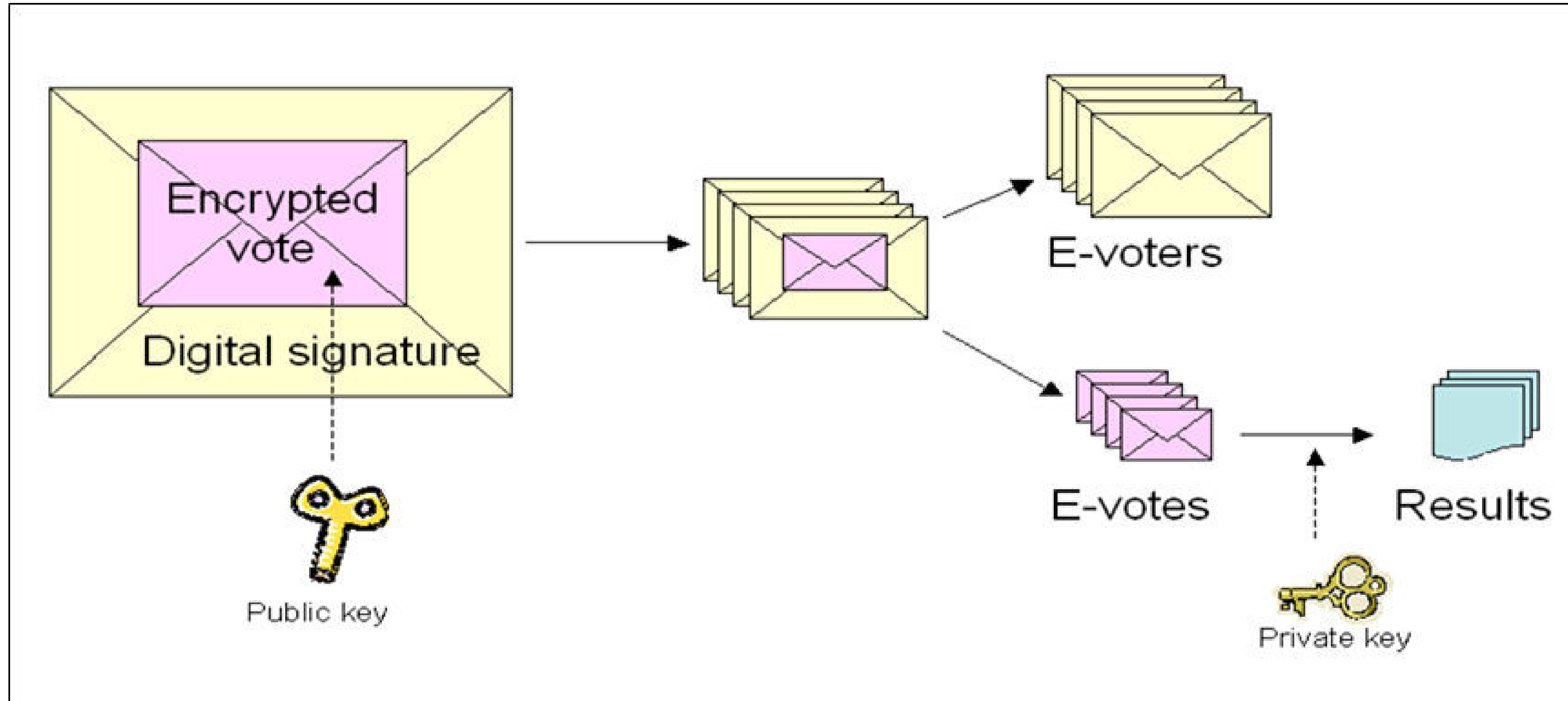


# Underlying principles of i-voting

- All major principles of paper voting are followed
- Secrecy of voting is ensured by possibility to re-vote and priority of the traditional voting
- State provided eID is used for authentication and voting
- Virtual double envelope scheme with public-private key cryptography
- Individual verification and universal audit



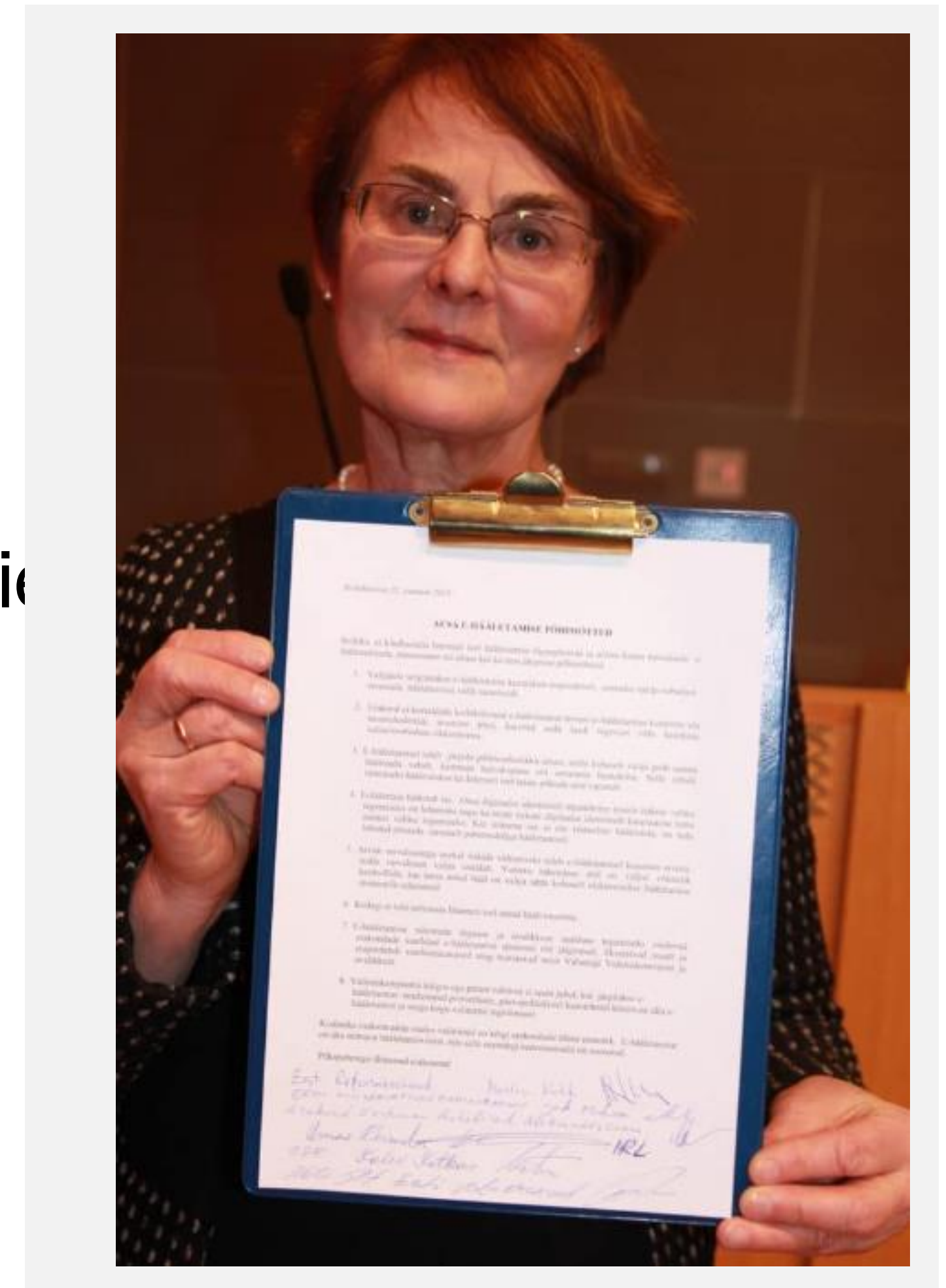
# “Double envelope” scheme





# Principles for fair i-voting

- Approved 2005, revised periodically
- Signed by all parliamentary parties 2019
- Parties do not:
  - organize collective e-voting actions
  - collect votes offering computer and other e-voting facilities
  - question without objective reasons the legitimacy of elections and/or e-voting on selfish day-politics grounds





# Government formation process

- Coalition governments as a rule
- President designates the candidate for Prime Minister (PM)
- Candidate for PM presents the principles of the government formation to the Riigikogu
- Riigikogu votes to authorize the candidate for PM to form a government
- Candidate for PM Prime minister presents members of the government to President
- President appoints the government to office





# Coalition negotiations

- Liberal democracy values as a broad common ground
- How to fulfill election promises when state spending has to be cut?
- How to include the coalition partners' priorities in the coalition agreement?



# Citizen participation in politics

- Referendum by decision of the Riigikogu
- Participatory democracy
  - Collective memoranda to the Riigikogu
  - Open legislative process in the Government
  - Lobby regulation
- Local democracy
  - Right to initiate legislation
  - Open government action plans
  - Participatory budgeting
  - ....



<https://rahvaalgatus.ee/>



Thank you!  
Questions?

[liia.hanni@ega.ee](mailto:liia.hanni@ega.ee)

