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Eesti tuleviku heaks

# Constitutions and institutional design in the Baltic States

## Part II

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TALLINNA ÜLIKOOL

# Presidents

- Estonia

- 1990-1992 Arnold Rüütel
- 1992-2001 Lennart Meri (2 terms)
- 2001-2006 Arnold Rüütel
- 2006–2011 Toomas-Hendrik Ilves

- Lithuania

- 1990-1992 Vytautas Landsbergis
- 1992-1998 Algirdas Brazauskas
- 1998-2003 Valdas Adamkus
- 2003-2004 Ronaldas Paksas (forced to resign)
- 2004-2009 Valdas Adamkus

- Latvia

- 1990-1993 Anatoljjs Gorbunovs (also speaker of parliament)
- 1993-1999 Guntis Ulmanis
- 1999-2007 Vaira-Vike Freiberga (2 terms)
- 2007-2012 Valdis Zatlers

# Local governments – Estonia I

- 253 LG-s. In 50% LG-s less than 2000 inhabitants.
- 1993 LG reform introduced *two-tier* LG.
- Regional level (13 regions) very weak (governor appointed by government, no regional council).
- All functions delegated to municipality level – small municipalities lack of recourses to cope with them.
- 2001 reform - forceful amalgamation of small LG-s failed, now voluntary amalgamation.
- But administrative territorial reform again in agenda.

# Local governments – Estonia II

- Financial dependency on central government increasing
- Parties strong - beside Bulgaria the *most politicized* LG-s in CEE
- All permanent residents can vote in local elections.
- The structure:
  - strong government,
  - mayor elected by council,
  - mayor and government more powerful than council

# Local governments – Latvia I

- System before 2008 administrative territorial reform:
  - 563 LG-s, 26 regions.
  - 72% LG-s population less than 2000 inhabitants.
  - 1993 LG reform introduced *two-tier* LG
  - Regional level quite weak (governor + council). Since 1997 council consisted of chairpersons of municipal councils
  - Same problems like in Estonia: small municipalities, voluntary amalgamation, financial centralization.
- General remarks
  - Parties very weak (30% of seats).
  - Only citizens allowed to vote.
  - Structure: mayor unknown, *committees* and chair of the council have leading role in decision-making.

# Local governments – Latvia II

- The current LG system after 2008 administrative territorial reform:
  - 109 rural municipalities, 9 cities – almost 5-fold decrease
  - Most of municipalities now over 5000 inhabitants (average around 10 000)
  - Different versions were discussed – 167, 102, 33 municipalities...
  - The plan to introduce 5 regions
  - The reform still in progress – economic crisis and lack of finances prevent the full implementation of reform

# Local governments – Lithuania I

- 60 LG-s, 10 regions. Average size of LG 30 000 – 50 000 inhabitants. The biggest LGs in the EU!!!
- 1996 LG reform – *3-tier* administration:
  - Regional level:
    - Governor (appointed by government) + county council (mayors of municipalities).
    - Governor - link between LG and government, supervises implementation of central government policy, more powerful than in Latvia and Estonia.
  - Municipality level:
    - Mayor head of executive and head of council (but a lot of his functions delegated to directors).
    - Anyway mayor leading figure in decision making.
    - Neighborhoods (ca. 500) – haven't official status, marginal functions, governed by appointee who is appointed by mayor.

# Local governments – Lithuania II

- General remarks:
  - Council elected for 4 years (Latvia, Estonia 3 years).
  - Proportional elections (like in Estonia, Latvia).
  - Only citizens can vote.
  - Parties stronger than in Latvia.
  - Main problems:
    - Distributions of functions between local-central level, municipality-regional level, etc.
    - LGs too big – some very big LGs have been splitted to create smaller LGs.



# Local governments - conclusion

	Main features	Regional level	Leading decision-maker in LG	Parties and politisation	Main problems and recent developments
Estonia	2-tier. 253 LG-s. 1/2 of LG-s very small.	Weak	Mayor and government	Very strong	Deep division between small and poor and prosperous LG-s. Voluntary amalgamation of small LG-s
Latvia	1-tier. 118 LG-s, regions not introduced yet	Weak, but stronger than in Estonia	Committees and chair of council	Weak	Deep division between small and poor and prosperous LG-s. Not clear if the new reform will be successful
Lithuania	2-tier. 60 LG-s. Big LG-s.	Stronger	Mayor	Stronger than in Latvia	Institutional problems – division of functions. LG reform in 2001

# Exercises

- Compare the process of institutional engineering in three Baltic countries in the early 1990's! What was similar, what was different?
- Compare the power of presidents in three Baltic countries!
- Compare the local governmental systems in in three Baltic countries! What are the main differences and similarities?
- Search for additional literature about Finland and France as other semi-presidential system in Europe? Compare the power of Lithuanian president with Finnish and French presidents!
- Compare the main feature of institutional design, power of presidents and parliaments in the Baltic States with your own home country! How different or similar are the Baltic States compared with your own home country?
- Compare the local governments in the Baltic countries with your own home country!

# References

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# Suggested reading

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