

TALLINN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY
MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Kenet Pindmaa

**E-CAMPAIGNING ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE
ESTONIAN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS
IN 2014**

Master Thesis

Supervisor: Prof. Dr Robert Krimmer

Author:/...../2016

Supervisor:/...../2016

Head of the Institute:/...../2016

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Declaration

Hereby I declare that this master thesis, my original investigation and achievement, submitted for the master degree at Tallinn University and has not been submitted before for any degree or examination.

All materials used in the work of other authors are equipped with relevant references.

Thesis has been supervised by Prof Dr. Rober Krimmer

“.....”.....2016

Author's signature

Kenet Pindmaa

/digitally

signed/

..... signature

Abstract

The goal of this thesis is to investigate the status on digital media in 2014 Estonian European Parliament elections and to assess to identify areas for improvement for more effective digital strategy for elections.

To reach these goals, an exploratory qualitative case study of the Estonian European Parliament elections in 2014 was conducted, where the aim is to find out how and why Internet campaigning is done and how it can be improved. For this study, data was collected through online monitoring, interviews and a literature review.

The purpose of the study is to look at the e-campaigning of the candidates and parties and to find out how it is done and how to make it better.

As a result of the analysis, suggestions for improving Internet campaigning for political elections and further development and research are proposed in this area.

Thesis author focused on online news, social media (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube), homepages/blogs/campaign pages and interviews to get the required data. Data collection and interviews were carried out from 1st of March to 25th of May 2014. More than 6500 screenshots were made during the collection of the monitoring data (mainly from Social Media (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) and from homepage/blogs). More than 714 PDF captures were made during the collection of the monitoring data (mainly from online news). More than 600 Google Alerts notifications about the candidates were electronically saved.

Information spreading through online media is in a constant change and it is very important to act fast. It is important that the right messages address the right audiences. E-campaigning need to be interactive, contain call to action and be well designed. During Estonian European Parliament elections in 2014 (EERE2014), online ads had been professionally done. Though, party websites need to be more interactive and contain the solutions for two-sided communication. Parties popular social network sites did not focus on growing the fan base and also communication was mainly one-sided. Candidates did not use popular social networks as much as they could have.

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1 Introduction

Internet use is increasing worldwide¹ and because of that there is a need for different approach in how to reach the electors. It is wise to communicate with the elector also in via the Internet. For that there is need to look at e-campaigning current status and what can be improved. Parties are spending lots of money for election campaigning in mass media, but is it used efficiently? Estonia is one of the first pioneers who started Internet voting on elections². The 2014 Estonian European Parliament elections was taken for the basis and it was a good possibility to examine and study Internet campaigning for data collection and from that basis make analysis and suggestions for improvements. In this thesis it is understood that e-voting comprises the casting of votes at a computer of choice using the Internet³. Estonians have the possibility to vote via Internet, but the question remains whether the current e-campaigning efforts are effective enough to gain the potential result that we have for the elective.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The goal of this thesis is to investigate the current status on digital media 2014 Estonian European Parliament elections and to assess to identify areas for improvement for more effective digital strategy for elections.

This work is useful for parties or political individuals who set up their candidate for elections, digital agencies who deal with digital campaigns for politics, persons who are interested in politics or digital media and also for anyone who wishes to learn about how to do campaigning for Internet voting.

¹ Internet world statistics: <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>

² Estonia is the first country in the world to hold national-wide e-voting election: <https://e-estonia.com/component/i-voting/>

³ Internet voting definition by Council of Europe: http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/goodgovernance/Activities/Key-Texts/Recommendations/LinkEvotingRec_en.asp

1.2 Significance of the Study

This topic is important and it is actual because:

- Estonia is the only country in the world that has introduced Internet voting in all elections.⁴ Hence, it is looked at by digital media strategists from around the world when they want to conduct an Internet election. This is why it is important that there is analysis done by the example of Estonian digital campaigning to provide lessons for others as well.
- Internet use is increasing overall⁵ and with this the likelihood that Internet users will also vote via the Internet. Hence if parties are not present on the Internet then they will lose opportunities to be elected.

1.3 Methodology

Firstly, there is data collected through online monitoring where the aim is to find out how and why Internet campaigning is done and how it can be improved.

Secondly, there is the need to make interviews (verbal non-structured) to get a better view of current status and future possibilities. Interviews will be recorded (this is the aim).

Interviews are needed to be done with parties, e-voting expert (Kristjan Vassil) and candidates. 8 interviews will be carried out (this is the goal). The interviews are chosen to get more comprehensive information, whereas the main data collection will be looking at the digital media campaigns.

Thirdly, there is used literature study of the state of art and on the basis of this. There is also included available studies of Estonia Internet campaigning and campaigning for elections on the Internet.

In further sections (1.4 Structure of thesis; 2.2 Strategy and study type; 2.5 Sample selection;

⁴ As follows Krimmer, R. (2015): World Map of E-Voting Activities, E-Voting.CC:
<https://www.e-voting.cc/en/it-elections/world-map/>

⁵ Internet world statistics: <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>
Estonian Statistics: <http://pub.stat.ee/> (2005 – 2013 every year the usage of the Internet is growing 9% compared to previous year). Internet world statistics: <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>

3.2 Data collection strategy; 3.3 Monitoring and 3.4 Limitations) there will be described when and why data is collected, planned steps and description to reach the stated goals, why certain methodology was chosen, how sample selection were chosen and used, what and how it is done to carry out the data collection, how the results are saved and reached and what are the limitations of monitoring the data. All links in this thesis have been checked for availability on 2016-12-02, unless where noted otherwise.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

In order to reach the stated goals, it is planned to do the following:

- Collecting data involving interviews, available material on the Internet, observe the campaigning between 90 days before the election until election day (from 1st march 2014 to 25th may 2014).
- On the basis of the literature study identification of current practices of Internet campaigning worldwide and in Estonia will be defined. Description of past experiences with election campaigning for Internet voting.
- Analyse the collected data, assess and write up case study.

Provide general assessment and areas for improvement on how to conduct campaigning for Internet voting.

Overall:

- Results interpretation and conclusions are obtained.
- Suggestions for further development and further research in this area.

1.5 Closing Remarks

Introduction topic described the propose of the study, used methodology and structure of the thesis to give overview about the thesis.

2 Research and Design of Study

2.1 Introduction

Research and Design of study topic will give overview about how the research is prepared. The description of the research strategy is provided and the reason why that kind of study type was chosen. Hypotheses are made and research questions formed. Descriptions are provided on what was used to focus on monitoring part (main channels, sample selection, tools for helping to do better monitoring, social media channels).

2.2 Strategy and Study Type

In 2014 Estonian European Parliament elections the possibility to vote is present for every at least 18 year old Estonian or European Union citizens who live permanently in Estonia. It is not possible to vote if citizen is in incapacity or imprisoned. The voter also needs to be by the 25th April on the voters list.

The voters can vote on election day, during pre-voting and by electronic means (e-voting). E-voting can be done wherever (location is not important). E-voting is from the 15th of May at 09:00 AM until the 21th of May at 06:00 PM. E-voting can be done only by using Estonian ID –card or mobile-ID that has Internet connection. The E-vote can be changed if the citizen does it on pre-voting, new e-voting or on the election day. If Citizen votes after e-voting on paper (pre-voting or election day voting) then the e-voting is no longer available.

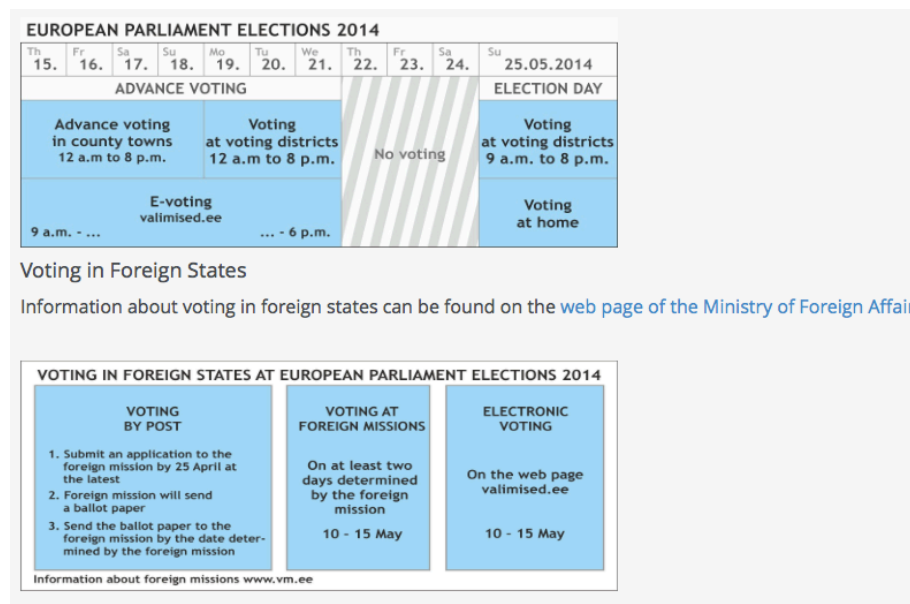


Figure 1 Voting timeframe <http://info.ep2014.vvk.ee/uldinfo/?locale=et> (info about voting is from VVK 23.11.15 13:54)

E-voting time frame and conditions were described above, but it is important that for whom the electors will vote and why they should do it on Internet. Results depend on the campaigning and in the current situation on e-campaigning. In e-campaigning there are two important aspects: I) How to drive the voters to info that the elective wants to give to voters II) Information presentation needs to be attractive and meaningful, that the voter will vote for the candidate (90% of decisions are done subconsciously⁶).

This author had time to monitor e-campaigning for three months before the elections and this will give a very good overview about the current situation and info basis for suggestions, for how the candidates can do better campaigning in the future.

For that, this author will use exploratory qualitative case study of the Estonian European Parliament elections in 2014 where the aim is to find out how and why Internet campaigning is done and how it can be improved. The aim of this study is to explore the behaviors of the election candidates on e-campaigning by focusing their actions of presenting themselves in the Internet. The conduction of in-depth research on a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life contexts by using multiple sources of evidence (documentation, archival records, interviews and direct observation) typically requires a case study methodology. Studies can be descriptive, exploratory or explanatory. Current research will use an exploratory approach to understand current political e-campaigning situation and to gain new insights. It will use also a holistic multiple-case study approach. Robert K. Yin (2014) mentions that there could be a problem with holistic design that entire nature of the design may shift during the course of study and the initial study questions may have reflected on orientation, but as the case study proceeds, a different orientation may emerge, and the evidence begins to address different research questions. Current thesis research questions wont shift, because the main aim is to understand current situation about the e-campaigning and the questions are made taken this into account.

Also verbal and non-structured interviews are carried out to understand better the goals and aims of the candidates for the current situation.

⁶ Decisions are done subconsciously:
<http://mag.ispo.com/2015/01/90-percent-of-all-purchasing-decisions-are-made-subconsciously/?lang=en>

2.3 Hypothesis

The research hypotheses are:

- 1) Current e-campaigning does not have proper online strategy.
- 2) Electors are on the Internet but parties and candidates do not reach the potential electors.

2.4 Research Questions

The research questions are:

- 1) How does the typical e-campaigning for Internet voting by parties and candidates look like on Estonian European Parliament elections in 2014?
- 2) What are the possibilities that are not used and what is needed to be done differently to gain more success from Internet campaigning?

2.5 Case Selection

This author has more than 10 years of experience in online marketing and moreover a potential voter. The monitoring of Estonian European Parliament elections in 2014 (EERE2014) was chosen to collect the online data about political Internet campaign, because previous Estonian election Internet campaigns were unprofessional and did not seem to take the full potential. In addition the next election was coming up when this author started thesis writing. Before EERE2014 candidates stated that online campaigning is less trustful and they are using Internet as a channel mainly because their opponents are doing it as well. Online campaigns were believed also to be expensive and with low success rate. Although the interest in Internet as a communication channel was high from the candidates side and furthermore from the voters side. EERE2014 election was the best one to monitor because there were many individual candidates, campaigning period is short and candidate is elected not party.

2.6 Closing Remarks

Research and Design of study topic gave overview about how the research was prepared.

3 Data Collection

3.1 Introduction

Data collection topic will give an overview about what and how it is done to carry out the data collection for thesis research part. Described is how the monitoring data is put together and how the results are saved. Also is described how the interview participants are reached and what are the frame questions of the interviews. The possible limitations of the data collection are brought out.

3.2 Data Collection Strategy

Data collection and interviews were carried out from 1st of March to 25th of May 2014. This period was taking into account that 3 months before the final election day there should be a good overview from the beginning of the campaigns. The approach was correct because the first party came out with the 2014 European Parliament platform at the beginning of March (REFORM party). Different parties have tried to do campaigning long and short times before the main election day and mainly it seems that parties are aiming for the shorter times before the elections, because then the elector can be better aimed for the needed result.

Case study evidence comes from documentation, archival records, interviews and direct observation.

The documentation evidence is mainly collected info from online mass media, like news and reports. News are saved in PDF format and are divided by date to separate folders. Reports about documentation evidence (News) is put to Excel.

The archival records evidence is mainly collected info about statistics (for example Social Media usage from digital agencies, Estonian Statistics Department etc.). Info is saved directly to thesis and linked to show the source. On archival records there is no overall report, files are divided electronically into certain folders.

Interview evidence is a short case study of the interviews. Planned time to carry out the interviews are 1h on-site meetings. Interviews are recorded, if that is allowed by the person interviewed. Info is saved on paper, in Word documents and recorded on a smartphone.

The direct observation evidence is mainly collected info from social media, online news and from homepages/blogs. Info is saved on screenshots, where the date and time are recorded and the info is divided to separate folders named after a candidate or a party. The report about direct observation is put to Excel.

New narrative compilations about ideas that caught attention or some new insights are saved to Word document or in a Excel file (in the Excel file there is a comment field where thesis author can mark for every candidate or party some information).

For increasing the reliability of the information in the case study, a chain of evidence is to be maintained. Materials are saved on paper and electronically archived on a hard drive, gmail.com and Google Drive.

Data was collected by the author of the thesis. No extra help was received for collecting data.

3.3 Sample Selection

Sample selection point will give overview on why certain channels were chosen and used. What was the time period when certain channels were monitored or used? The main focus of this thesis was to monitor only online channels.

Sample selection was made on the basis of which online channels people use the most. Thesis author focused on online news, social media homepages/blogs/campaign pages and interviews to get the required data.

E-campaigning social media channels usage for monitoring:

Social media sample selection for data monitoring was made on the basis of 2013 social media usage statistics (info taken from Estonian ADM Digital Agency). Facebook, Youtube and Twitter was selected for monitoring. Google + was not selected, because most of Google + accounts are automatically activated if people have gmail.com accounts – so the statistic part does not show actual active Google + accounts.

Twitter is not that much used in Estonia, but it was selected to the sample because it is used by political interest groups and by journalists – if they pick up some interesting topic from Twitter, then they will expand the information in online media or some other media form.

1) Facebook

This author added to his personal Facebook account parties-, young parties-, candidates personal- (follow function), candidates/parties support accounts. When adding Facebook accounts, then the account needed to be public and there was no “adding a friend” or other commitments (for example personal Facebook account information is shared to some party/candidate fan page).

Kenet Pindmaa Facebook account is “Kenet Pindmaa”

2) Twitter

This author added to his personal Twitter account parties-, Young parties-, candidates personal- (follow function), candidates/parties support accounts. Kenet Pindmaa Twitter account is @kenetp.

3) YouTube

This author took for the basis candidates, parties, young parties name list and searched from Google and YouTube the possible YouTube channels that certain candidate or party had (here is not looked the YouTube pages, where other people shared videos about candidates or parties). Rule is, that candidate or party should be the owner of certain YouTube channel.

E-campaigning other channels usage for monitoring:

1) Online news manual monitoring

Online news manual monitoring means, that thesis author will be collecting manually (saved screenshots) online news of the Internet.

Online news sample is put together on the TNS Emor statistics basis according to different profile and usage (14.02.14):

<http://tnsmatrix.emor.ee/>

Commentaries are not taken into the sample.

Publications that are being monitored manually:

- Postimees (www.postimees.ee)
- Postimes political portal (www.poliitika.postimees.ee)
- Delfi (www.delfi.ee)
- Delfi political portal
(<http://www.delfi.ee/news/paevauudised/epvalimised/>)
- EPL (<http://epl.delfi.ee/>)
- Õhtuleht (<http://xn--htuleht-00a.ee/>)
- Äripäev (<http://www.aripaev.ee/>)

Candidates information is being monitored and collected from the online news. It does not matter whether the story is created by journalists or the candidate has written it. Rule is that if there is a story about the candidate, then this is taken into account.

2) Google Alerts

In 2014 European Parliament Elections 88 candidates are participating (16 independent candidates and 72 candidates that are in some party (Eestimaa Ühendatud Vasakpartei, Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond, Erakond Eestimaa Rohelised, Erakond Isamaa ja Res Publica Liit, Eesti Keskerakond, Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond, Eesti Reformierakond ja Eesti Iseseisvuspartei)) that are registered by the Election Commission (Valimiskomisjon). For better online monitoring the names of all 88 candidates are inserted to Google Alerts and it is configured in a way that the information about the candidate's media coverage is received on a daily basis.

Google Alerts goal was to find online news about the candidates.

Alerts

Everything	Language	Volume	How often	Deliver to
<input type="checkbox"/> Aadu Must	Estonian	All results	Once a day	kenet.pindmaa@gmail.com
<input type="checkbox"/> Abdul Hamid Turay	Estonian	All results	Once a day	kenet.pindmaa@gmail.com
<input type="checkbox"/> Aivar Riisalu	Estonian	All results	Once a day	kenet.pindmaa@gmail.com
<input type="checkbox"/> Aivar Sõerd	Estonian	All results	Once a day	kenet.pindmaa@gmail.com
<input type="checkbox"/> Andres Inn	Estonian	All results	Once a day	kenet.pindmaa@gmail.com
<input type="checkbox"/> Andres Lillemäe	Estonian	All results	Once a day	kenet.pindmaa@gmail.com
<input type="checkbox"/> andrus ansip	Estonian	All results	Once a day	kenet.pindmaa@gmail.com
<input type="checkbox"/> Anti Poolamets	Estonian	All results	Once a day	kenet.pindmaa@gmail.com
<input type="checkbox"/> Anvar Samost	Estonian	All results	Once a day	kenet.pindmaa@gmail.com
<input type="checkbox"/> Arto Aas	Estonian	All results	Once a day	kenet.pindmaa@gmail.com
<input type="checkbox"/> Darja Vorontsova	Estonian	All results	Once a day	kenet.pindmaa@gmail.com

Figure 2 Example about Google Alerts configuration

3) Station

For better online news monitoring the info portal www.station.ee is taken into use.

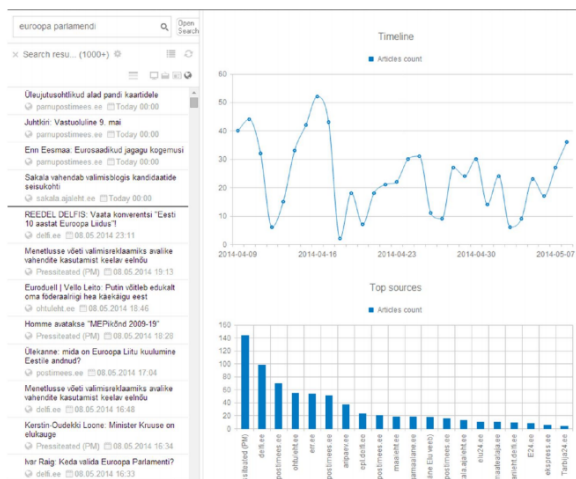


Figure 3 Example of www.station.ee

On Station.ee a search is made by wording “euroopa parlamendi” (European Parliament) for news/articles/opinions etc. Info portal Station shows information where both words are in use (they don’t have to be side by side) and where the two words can be in declination (for example station searches by “euroopa parlament” also).

Station searches info from all over Estonian online news channels (for example it shows county newspapers (Sakala) and weekly newspapers (Eesti Ekspress)). It shows info also from online newspapers that are not free.

NB Google Alerts, online news manual monitoring and Station exclude the same online news (it means that if the same news are found in different channels, then one news item counts not more than one).

4) Blogs/Homepages/Campaign pages (individual and also parties)

Thesis author took for the basis candidates, parties, young parties name lists and searched from Google blogs/homepages/campaign pages. Rule was that the candidate or the party needs to be the owner of the site under scrutiny.

5) Interviews

The main goal of this thesis is to investigate monitoring results and come up with new and effective solutions. Interviews are carried out to better understand the online campaigning of the political parties and various candidates. In interviews the focus is on the biggest and most popular parties and candidates, who have done extensive online campaigning in some previous political election. Also there is aim to do an interview with a Estonian Political Research Expert to get extra information and suggestions on how to do a better research.

Parties that are taken into interview sample selection:

- Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond
- Erakond Isamaa ja Res Publica Liit
- Eesti Keskerakond
- Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond
- Eesti Reformierakond

Candidates that are taken into interview sample selection:

- Indrek Tarand – performed a good campaign in previous Estonian European Parliament election that got him elected.

- Erik-Niiles Kross – made in 2013 Estonian Local Government election a good online campaign.

Political Research Expert included into interview sample selection:

- Kristjan Vassil

3.4 Monitoring

For candidates, parties and youth parties monitoring, MS Excel is used where these topics are divided onto three different sheets. All the sheets have different inputs. Social Media (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) and homepages/blogs info will be saved also by screenshots and for online news www.pdfmyurl.com is used that provides the possibility to save online news in PDF format.

Thesis author tried to monitor the candidates info on a daily basis. Party and youth party info at the beginning, in the middle and in the end (results were taken by the last status) of the campaign. The main focus went to monitoring the candidates, because in European Parliament elections the individual candidate is chosen.

3.4.1 Candidates

2014 Estonian European Parliament elections had 88 candidates (16 independent candidates and 72 candidates that are party members).

Thesis author set his aim to collect info about candidates: **Facebook** private account and Facebook public figure account (does the candidate have a private Facebook account or/and a public figure Facebook account; in what language the info is provided, does the private Facebook account have a possibility for fans to follow the candidate, how many fans there are, how many posts there are, are the posts election related or political posts and/or private posts, is the info linked to another channel (online news, blogs, videos etc)),

YouTube (does the candidate have a YouTube channel, in what language the videos are, how many videos there are etc),

Homepage/blog (does the candidate have a homepage, in what languages is the page in, how many posts there are, are the posts election related or political or private posts),

Twitter (does the candidate have a Twitter account, in what language are the tweets, how many tweets there are, are the tweets election related or political or private tweets, does the

tweets link to online news/Facebook or other Social Media channel (other Twitter accounts, YouTube etc.)),

Online news (in how many online news was something written about the candidate and by monthly basis (March, April and May), where the news election related or political or private news)

and

Campaign pages (does the candidate have a campaign page and in what language the is the page).

Also in Excel there is for every candidate a comments field, where the author can mark points of interest about the campaign of the candidate.

3.4.2 Party

8 parteis took part in 2014 Estonian European Parliament elections (Eestimaa Ühendatud Vasakpartei, Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond, Erakond Eestimaa Rohelised, Erakond Isamaa ja Res Publica Liit, Eesti Keskerakond, Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond, Eesti Reformierakond ja Eesti Iseseisvuspartei).

This author set aim to collect the following info about the parties:

Homepage (does the party have a homepage, does it have a donation possibility, what languages is the page in, does it have a election platform, is introduction of the candidates present, does it have links to e-voting, is the page interactive),

Facebook page (does the party have a Facebook page; in what language the info is, how many fans there are, how many posts there are, are the posts election related or political posts),

Twitter (does the party have a Twitter account, in what language the tweets are, how many tweets there are, are the tweets election related or political posts, does the posts link to online news/party page/Facebook or other Social Media channels (other Twitter accounts, YouTube etc.)),

YouTube (does the party have a YouTube channel, in what language the videos are in, how many videos there are)

and

Campaign pages (does the party have a campaign page and in what language is the page in).

Also in Excel there is for every party a comments field where author can mark interesting points about the party.

3.4.3 Youth party

In 2014 Estonian European Parliament elections (EP) 8 parties are taking part and thesis author gathered information regarding the youth parties (if present) and whether they show active support to the parties and the candidates.

Thesis author set aim to collect the following info about the youth parties:

Homepages (does the youth party have a homepage),

Facebook (does the youth party have a Facebook account),

Twitter (does the youth party have a Twitter account),

and

does the youth party support EP elections and/or the candidates.

Also in Excel there is for every youth party a comments field where the author can mark interesting points about the youth party.

3.4.4 Interviews

Interviews are verbal and not structured. Parties (Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond, Erakond Isamaa ja Res Publica Liit, Eesti Keskerakond, Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond and Eesti Reformierakond) are contacted through the campaign manager or overall e-mail/phone (info is found on the homepage). The name of the person with whom the interview was carried out is not presented in this thesis – the person stays anonymous.

Candidates (Indrek Tarand and Erik-Niiles Kross) are contacted by e-mail that is found on their homepage or Social Media channel.

Robert K. Yin (2014) says: “To interview key persons, you must cater to the interviewees schedules and availability, not your own. The nature of the interview is much more open-ended, and an interviewee may not necessarily cooperate in sticking to your line of questions.” This approach is also taken into use to carry out the interviews in order to find the best times to the interviewees and to have a set of frame questions upfront.

For parties and candidates frame of questions are made that are taken for their basis:

- Is there a separate e-channel strategy? If yes, then what is it like?
- Is there a separate social media strategy? If yes, then what is it like?
- Are the latest trends in technology in use? For example the homepage needs to be responsive.
- Who is the target group and why? Is info targeted and how it is done?
- Is multi-language important and what languages are used in the campaigns? Is info targeted?
- In which channels the e-campaigning is presented (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, online news/portals etc.) and why? Are the so called new channels, like Instagram, in use?
- How the communication differs between the channels?
- Is there a plan to direct people to vote and asking not to vote for certain party or candidate?
- Is there a plan to use separate theme pages or campaign pages? Are there plans to use party branding on candidates Facebook/Twitter/Blog pages? Is there a plan to show party goals in individual candidates channels?
- Is this time something different done in e-campaigning?
- Are donations asked through e-channels?
- Is there a plan to compare party with other parties?

Political research expert (Kristjan Vassil) is contacted by e-mail.

For that a frame of questions is made that are taken for basis:

- Which researches are currently ongoing that are related to e-campaigning/ 2014 Estonian European Parliament elections?
- Overall expression about the 2014 Estonian European Parliament elections? Was there something different than on the previous elections?
- Was there a bigger pressure forcing people to e-vote than during the previous Estonian European Parliament elections?
- Who were the voters and why? Is fear for e-vote security still an issue?
- Involvement of the people in voting/e-voting?
- Parties don't value the e-campaigning that much. Why?
- Usage of different languages for e-voting?

3.5 Limitations

The monitoring of the candidates is done from the 1st of March to the 25th of May. The main aim is to monitor the online environment daily, except on a few days when it is not possible due to various reasons and the author of the thesis will collect the info for said non-monitored days in the future (not during the same exact day when the info was posted).

Thesis author will try his best to get all the info, but the reality is that some info can be missed. Conclusions and suggestions are reached, based on the info that is found and processed.

Facebook fans/posts/followers numbers; Twitter tweets/followers numbers; online news posts numbers; YouTube video numbers; Homepage/Blog post numbers are looked at during the monitoring period but checked after 26th of May once again and the last results are saved. For example the Facebook fan numbers can be at the beginning of the monitoring period 100, but at the end of the monitoring period (and at the end of the elections) they can be 1000.

3.6 Closing Remarks

The data collection topic gives an overview about what was done for data collection and how it was done. Described are also limitations that are faced during the data collection.

4 Results of the Survey

4.1 Introduction

Results of the survey topic will give an overview about parties, young parties and candidates monitoring results and also interviews output. Thesis author took for the structure basis the “2011 Riigikogu elections: Analysis of online campaigns” e-Governance Academy analysis framework.

More than 6500 screenshots were made during the collection of the monitoring data (mainly from Social Media (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) and from homepage/blogs). More than 714 PDF captures were during the collection of the monitoring data (mainly from online news).

More than 600 Google Alerts notifications (started from the middle of April 2014 to the end of May 2014) about the candidates were electronically saved. From interview side four interviews were made – three with parties and one with a political expert. In overall perspective, getting the interviews was not easy. Several approaches were needed and some of the parties declined due to claimed lack of time or did not answer at all.

4.2 Campaigns on Official Party Websites

4.2.1 General Information

Boogers and Voermann (2003) claim that many of the people who look up election-related information on the web have not made up their mind. Therefore the content and professional presentation of the website could have a critical role in helping these people decide for whom to vote. Previous information is from the “2011 Riigikogu elections: Analysis of online campaigns” e-Governance Academy analysis document.

Like Kamarck (1999), Clarson and Djupsund (2001), Šein-Meier (2009), “2011 Riigikogu elections Analysis of online campaigns” by Estonian e-Governance Academy will bring up, the websites do not feature many interactive solutions and do not go into dialogue with the voters. In 2014 Estonian European Parliament election it seems to be the same case.

There is no party that has active forum between the voters and the potential candidates. It could be that parties don't want to have a two-way conversation where unwanted comments might appear for the viewers to see. EKRE webpage had link to their forum. SDME has one-way feedback form. Most of the party webpages contain links to different Social Media

channels (REFORM, IRL, KESK, EKRE and SDE) though. The largest amount of links to Social Media has REFORM – Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Vimeo, Instagram and Pinterest). Also links to the blogs of various candidates are present. Parties web pages are dedicated to the positive characteristics of themselves. Also some parties will go against some other party with claims why they are good and why other party is bad (here we can bring out REFORM party that compare themselves with KESK party – Andrus Ansip against Edgar Savisaar).

All parties (Eestimaa Ühendatud Vasakpartei (EÜV), Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond (SDME), Erakond Eestimaa Rohelised (EER), Erakond Isamaa ja Res Publica Liit (IRL), Eesti Keskerakond (KESK), Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond (EKRE), Eesti Reformierakond (REFORM) and Eesti Iseseisvuspartei (EIP)) that are participating at the 2014 Estonian European Parliament elections (EEPE2014) have homepages.

	EÜV	SDME	EER	IRL	KESK	EKRE	REFORM	EIP
Donation (Y/N)	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Language	EST; ENG; RUS;	EST; ENG; RUS;	EST	EST; ENG; RUS	EST	EST	EST	EST
Election platform (Y/N)	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Candidates introduction (Y/N)	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Links to e-vote (Y/N)	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N
Interactivity (Y/N)	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N

Table 1 Parties overview

Seven parties out of eight have the possibility to donate present on their homepage. Five parties out of eight have their homepage in Estonian and three in Estonian, Russian and English. All parties have homepages, though EÜV party has a static page that does not provide any information related to EEPE2014. Five homepages out of eight have interactivity. It means that they have some elements of interactivity, but how it is done will be covered in next points. Candidates introduction is provided by six parties out of eight. Links to e-voting is provided by three parties out of eight. REFORM, SDME, IRL have the most advanced homepages out of all eight (they have the most elements that was monitored on the thesis). KESK and EKRE are only missing links to e-vote, but other elements are present. It could be

that they are not linking to e-voting, because they don't believe that e-voting is secure enough to have a safe voting process. For example KESK suggests people to vote on the paper. REFORM has the most responsive web page. SDME campaign page, KESK new homepage, EKRE campaign page have also responsive pages, but all in all there is not much attention given that homepage would work properly on different screens and devices.

4.2.2 The availability of elections-related information

Most of the parties had election platform and candidates introduction on the homepages. Eestimaa Ühendatud Vasakpartei did not have any info about election platform or candidates introduction. Eesti Iseseisvuspartei had election platform but no candidates introductions.

SDME informed about their EEPE2014 doings in the earliest phase, when even the party candidates names were not confirmed by the party. They brought up on their homepage potential candidates names and pictures, and informed that the candidates are being agreed upon during the 29th of March SDME overall board meeting.



Figure 4 SDME homepage screenshot

On their homepage a possibility was provided to watch the SDME overall board meeting where the EEPE2014 SDME candidates were chosen.



Figure 5 SDME homepage screenshot

The new campaign page was focused on the candidates, the team and ideas and the election platform information was brought out. Info was focused and candidate professional pictures were shown. The photos of the candidates give the impression like the persons pictured are experts of their fields – good pictures.



Figure 6 SDME campaign page screenshot

Candidate’s personal information about her/his career, candidate number, “why the person set up their candidacy”, contact, campaign videos and interviews are presented in clean and focused way.



TUGEV MEESKOND

TUGEVAD IDEED

Marju Lauristin, 102

Ivari Padar, 103

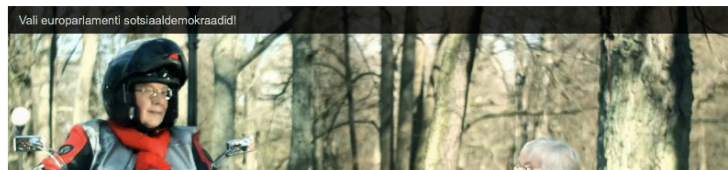


Figure 7 SDME campaign page screenshot

Randel Länts, 112

Toomas Alatalu, 113

Marju Lauristin

marju.lauristin@ut.ee

Piirkondade kontaktid
Sirvi meie ajakirja

taasiseseisvumise üks liidreid.

Elulugu

Marju Lauristin alustas tööd Tartu Ülikoolis Ülo Vooglaiu juhitud sotsioloogialaboris ja on alates 1972. aastast kuni tänaseni tegutsenud ülikoolis ajakirjanduse ja kommunikatsiooni õppejõuna. Praegu töötab Tartu Ülikooli Ühiskonnateaduste Instituudis sotsiaalse kommunikatsiooni professorina.

Kuulub Tartu linnavolikokku ja on SDE programmitoimkonna liige.

Laulva revolutsiooni ajal kuulus Rahvarinde eestseisusesse. Eesti Sotsiaaldemokraatliku Iseseisvuspartei üks asutajaid ning sotsiaaldemokraatliku erakonna esimene esimees 1990–1995.

Laari valitsuse sotsiaalministrina 1992–1994 juhtis solidaarse sotsiaal- ja ravikindlustussüsteemi aluste rajamist.

Oma akadeemilises uurimistöös tegeleb Eesti siirdeaja ühiskonna analüüsiga, on osalenud ekspordina arengustrateegia Säästev Eesti 21 loomises. Olnud Eesti Inimarengu aruande toimetaja.

Omab pikaagest rahvusvahelist kogemust nii teadlase kui ka poliitikuna: 1991–1992 valmistas Eesti delegatsiooni juhina ette Eesti vastuvõtmise Euroopa Nõukogu täisliikmeks, on olnud kaheksa aastat (1998–2002 ja 2004–2008) Euroopa Nõukogu vähemusrahvuste õiguste järelevalvekomitee liige, kuus aastat (2001–2006) ÜRO Majandus- ja Sotsiaalnõukogu (ECOSOC) arengupoliitika ekspertkomitees, neli aastat (2001–2005) Euroopa Komisjoni vananemisalase ekspertgrupi liige. 2003–2006 osales rahvusvahelises uuringuprojekti, mis analüüsis kriitiliselt Euroopa Komisjoni kommunikatsiooni avalikkusega.

Sündinud Tallinnas 7. aprillil 1940, lõpetanud kuldmedaliga Tallinna 7. keskkooli 1957. aastal ja õppinud Tartu Ülikoolis 1958–1966 eesti filoloogiat (ajakirjanduse eriharus) ning 1967–1989 filosoofia aspirantuuris.

Elab ja töötab Tartus. On kuue lapselapse vanaema ja nelja lapselapselapse vanavanaema.

Miks kandideerin?

“Kandideerin Euroopa Parlamenti, sest leian, et praegu on aeg, kus nii Eesti kui ka Euroopa seisavad uute valikute ees. Olen veendunud, et Euroopa Liit tervikuna ja Eesti koos Euroopaga vajab inimkesket, mitte üksnes majanduslikest, vaid ka sotsiaalsetest ja kultuurilistest väärtustest juhinduvat poliitikat. Tahan oma kogemustele ja teadmistele

Figure 8 SDME campaign page screenshot

Election platform is in a text format and the main points are tagged with links (a quick way to a point out what the party thinks should be highlighted). There is no possibility to view the election platform or save it directly (for example a PDF document).



Figure 9 SDME campaign page screenshot

Overall there is a good presentation about the election related information on their homepage. The platform is presented and candidates information with pictures is also present.

EER homepage had elector names, candidate election numbers and pictures, but no candidates introduction.

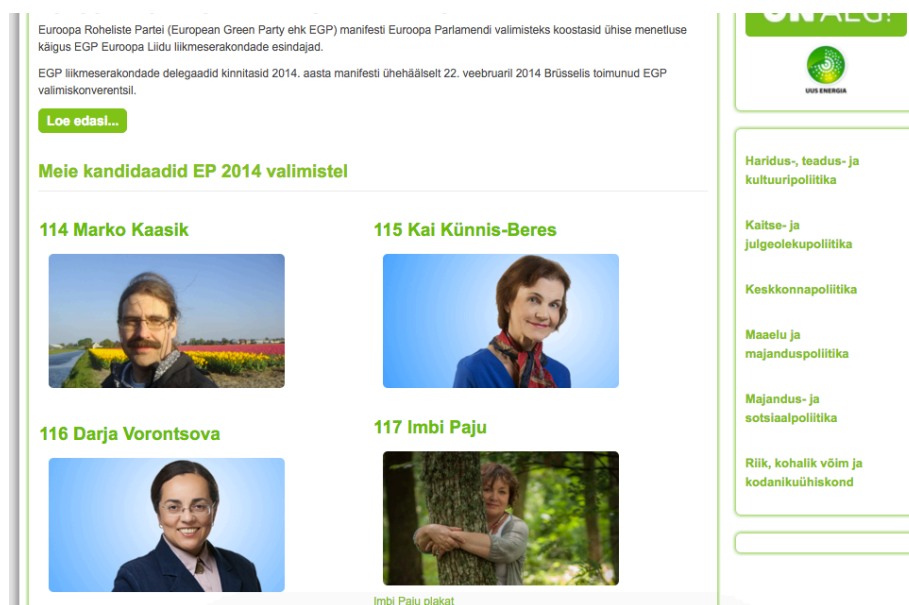


Figure 10 EER homepage screenshot

To thesis author it seems that there is no specific EEPE2014 platform but EER has 2014 overall program which shows the overall views which adopt to EEPE2014 elections as well. Platform info is text-based and can not be downloaded in PDF format.

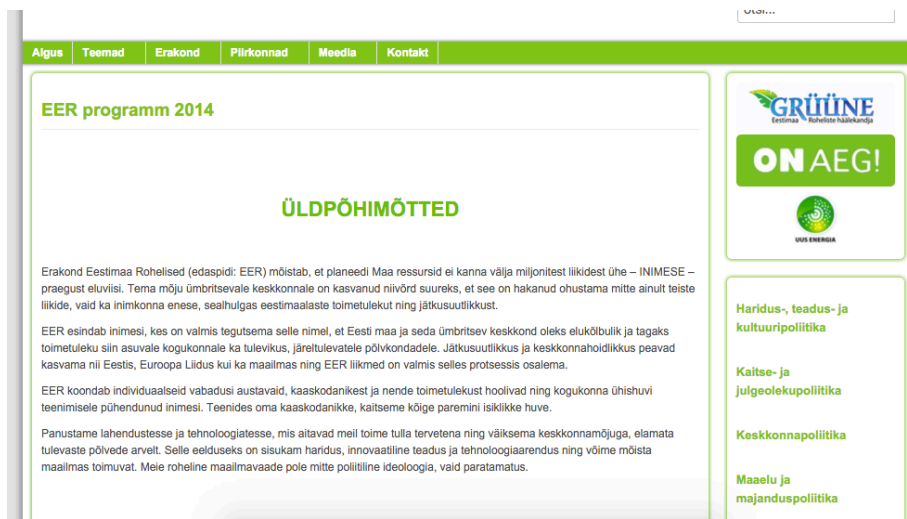


Figure 11 EER homepage screenshot

Overall there is not a lot of logical structuring, the names and pictures of the candidates are presented, but no extra info. Also it remains unclear whether the EER 2014 platform is also their EEPE2014 platform. Thesis author assumed the EER overall platform relates to it.

IRL informed about their EEPE2014 doings in the earliest phase. Also their candidate list was confirmed by the party in the beginning of March. On their homepage the info was put up on the same day when the list of names was confirmed. Also the main candidate is mentioned and what are other candidates names by order.

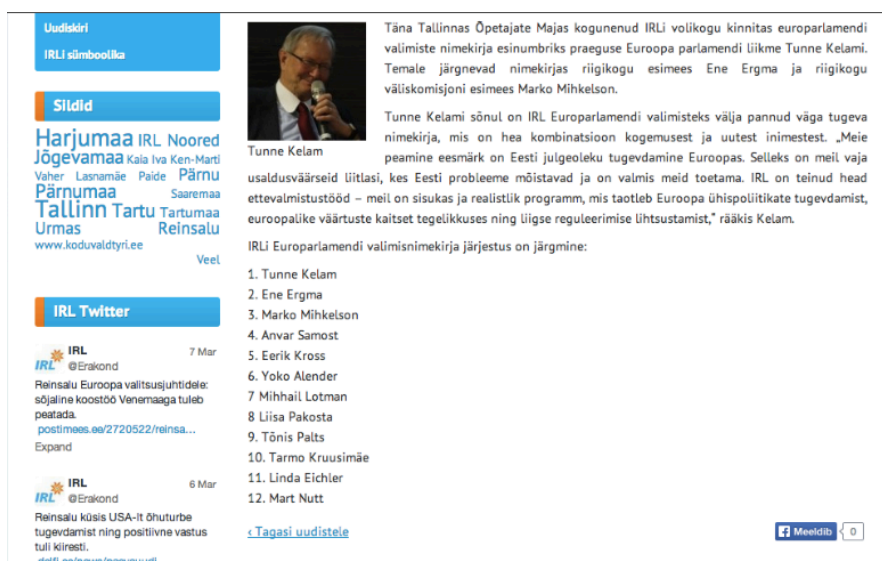


Figure 12 IRL homepage screenshot

EEPE2014 platform document is linked from to homepage to Issuu (www.issuu.com) environment. Issuu is an environment where publications can be uploaded and it will present them with the feel of a real book. Thesis author does not find that this is a good way to present the document, because for many users this may not be simple and fast to use.

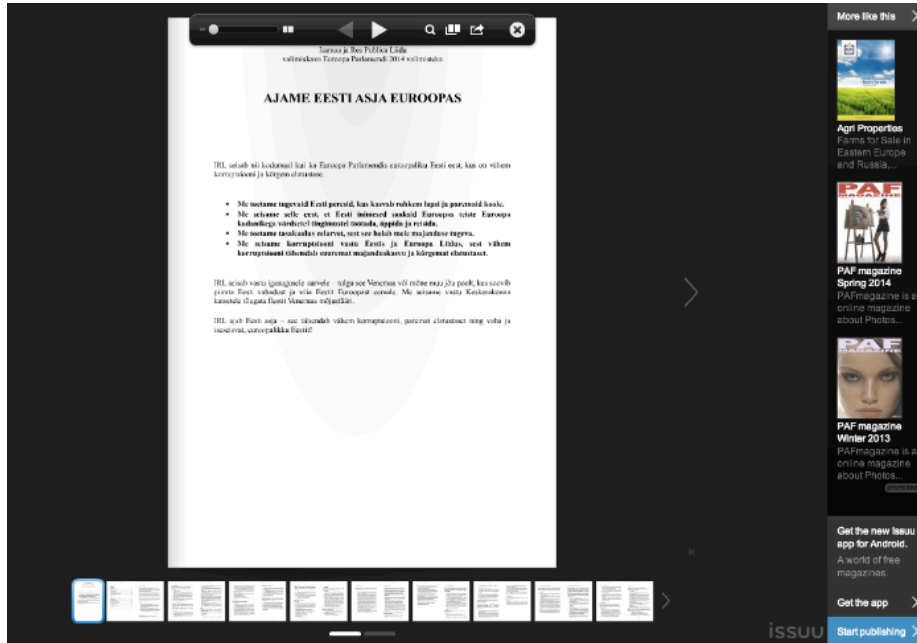


Figure 13 IRL homepage screenshot

Also if someone wants to download the document, then it is required that the person must register as a Issuu user. This limits the spreading of the document. Also on the right side there are suggestions to other documents that take the focus away from the election program.

The main page of the IRL homepage is focused on the candidates and on all election related information. Candidate pictures, names and personal info is presented.

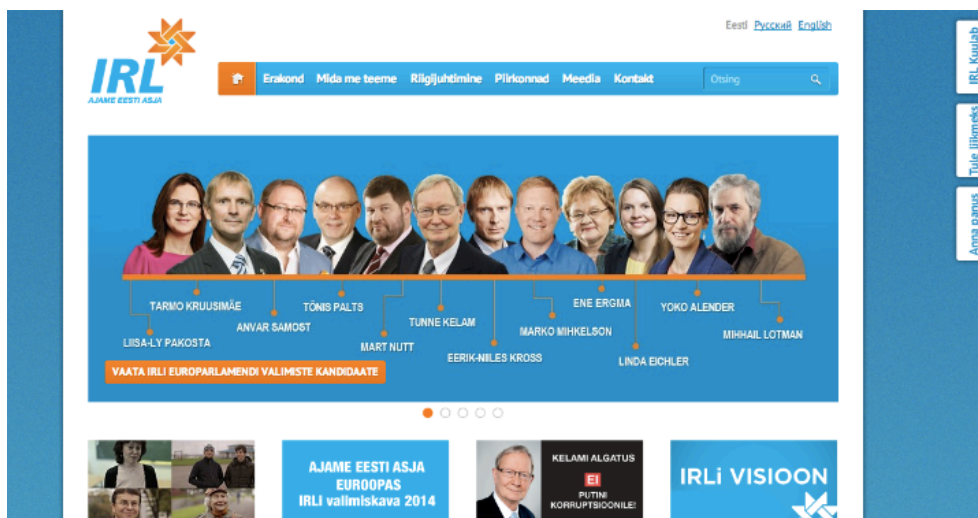


Figure 14 IRL homepage screenshot

In May 2014 a election info layer was on top of the homepage. It contained overall info about the party participation in the election, how much time was left until the election day, election platform link and info about the candidates.



Figure 15 IRL homepage info layer screenshot

On the info layer descriptions of the candidate's views were present, election number and video with candidate introduction.

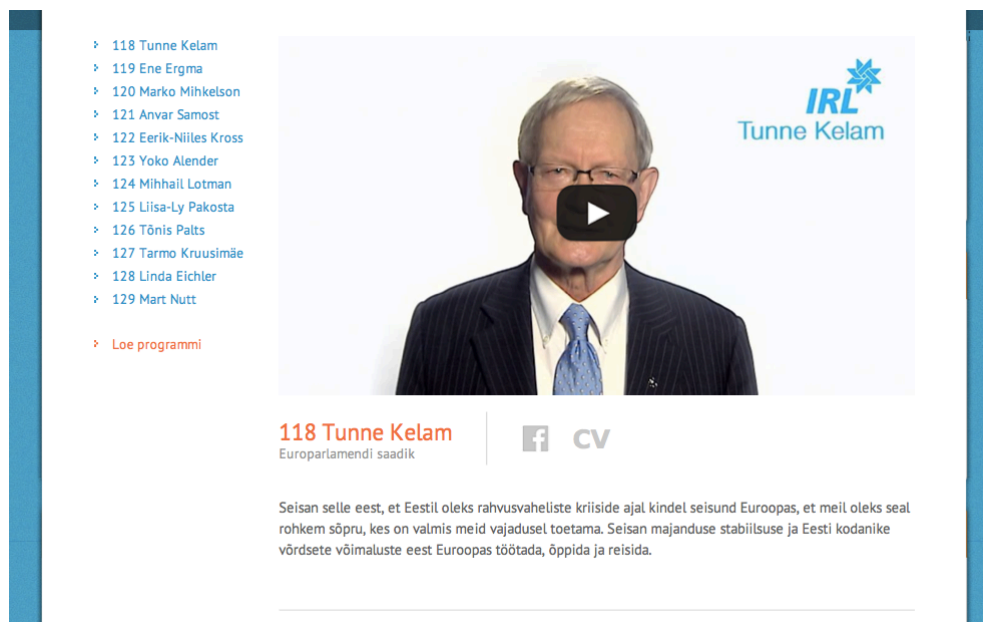


Figure 16 IRL homepage info layer screenshot

Overall, already in early stages the information about the elections was given, including the list of the confirmed candidates. Election platform is presented, but it is not so convenient to use for the average computer user. Also, party homepage gives info about candidates introduction, election number and video.

KESK party gives information and forms to potential candidates on their homepage how they can set up their candidacy for the inside elections of KESK candidates for the EEPE2014 elections. This was detected on the first half of March 2014.

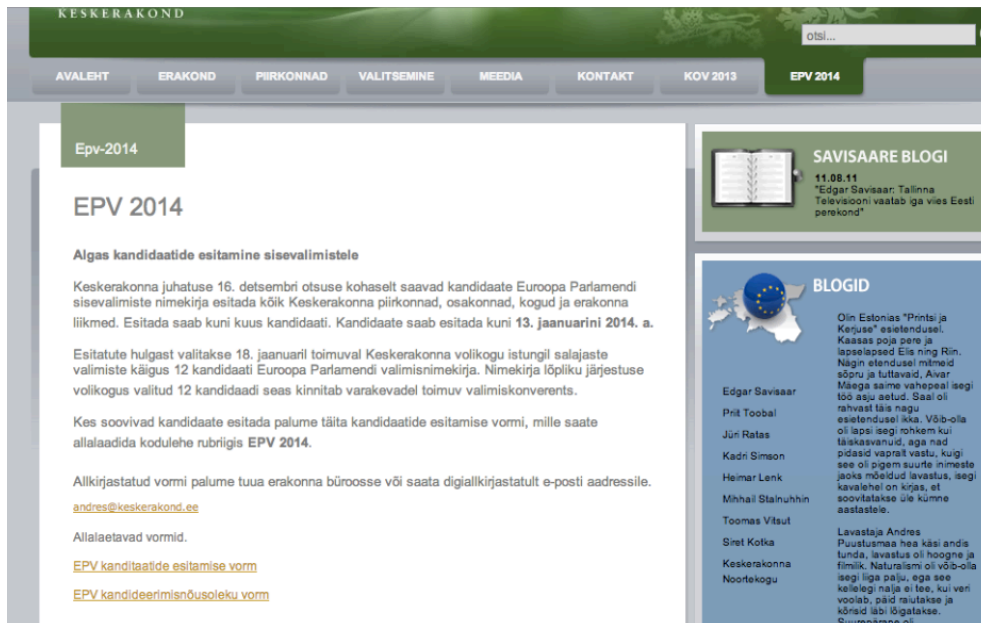


Figure 17 KESK homepage screenshot

On KESK new homepage the focus is on the EEPE2014 candidates. On the main homepage slider the pictures, names and election numbers of the candidates are present.



Figure 18 KESK new homepage screenshot

There is a possibility to view the election platform and save it directly (for example as a PDF document). On the homepage there is a selection of what is considered actual – the first option is info about the EEPE2014 election. Although there should be more information about the

candidates, why they want to become a member of European Parliament and what a certain candidate is planning to do when winning the election. The information about the election is present in the news feed. For example the news about confirming of the candidates appeared on the same day when the confirmation was actually done.

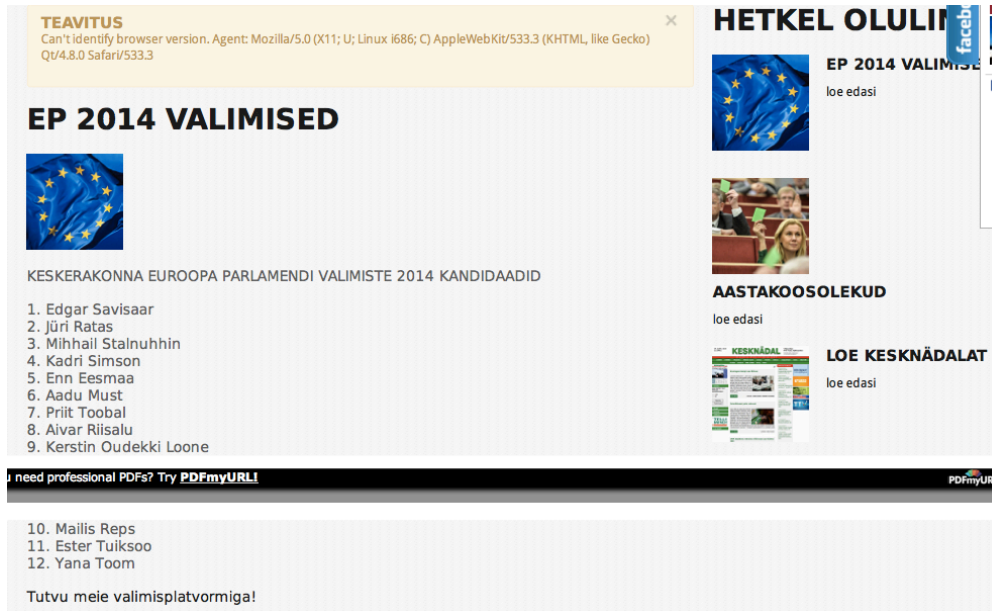


Figure 19 KESK new homepage screenshot

Overall the EEPE2014 election info with candidate pictures, election numbers and the election platform is presented.

EKRE has on their homepage candidate names, pictures, election numbers and links to other candidates from the viewpoint of certain other candidate. Election platform is on the homepage in text format and it is not possible to save it in PDF format.



Figure 20 EKRE homepage screenshot

Candidates have Youtube video introduction about their views, but on the homepage that is not presented in the candidate introduction.

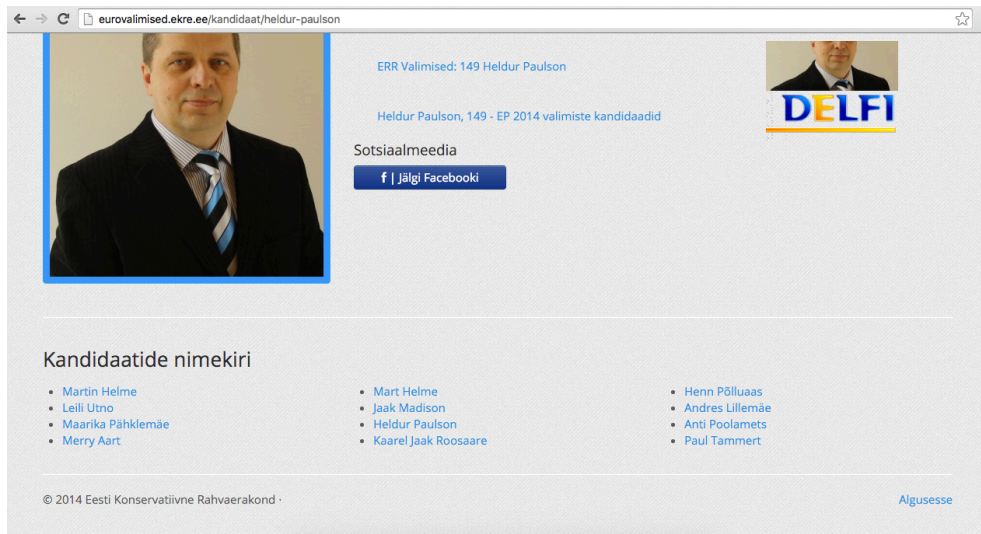


Figure 21 EKRE homepage screenshot

Overall EKRE has information about their candidates and election platform.

REFORM had on their homepage candidate information, professional pictures, election numbers, candidates contacts and the schedules for meetings with electors with map directions. REFORM was the first party on the elections to come out with the election platform and potential candidates. On the 1st of March 2014 REFORM stated on the homepage news section that they have confirmed their EEPE2014 program.



Figure 22 REFORM homepage screenshot

In the first half of March 2014 the candidate pictures and introductions were brought out according to candidates priority order to the party. Pictures were professional. Election

platform had a focused introduction summary and the program could be saved in PDF format. Election program was in primary focus – not after the candidates pictures and info.



Figure 23 REFORM homepage screenshot

In the second half of March 2014 the election related information was brought even more forward. On the main menu a link about the elections appeared and positioned on a prominent position for clicking. At the beginning of March the most important candidate was Kaja Kallas, during the second half of March it was Andrus Ansip with Kaja Kallas second. The photo of Kaja Kallas was changed also.



Figure 24 REFORM homepage screenshot

Overall REFORM party had a well structured and informative homepage that supported election information from both party and candidates side.

4.2.3 Making suggestions and donations, signing up for news

Most of the parties had donation possibilities except Eestimaa Ühendatud Vasakpartei. The opportunity to support parties financially is also limited in its accessibility – donation is not in

focus on the page and it is not so easy to find. Although eight parties out of nine invite people to make donations, only one party features a form on their website with a direct link to Internet bank. Others only list account numbers or contact information. REFORM home page donation option is made very easy for page visitors. Donations can be made via a bank link. “2011 Riigikogu elections Analysis of online campaigns” by Estonian e-Governance Academy will bring up that the REFORM party is the only one to present a form for making donations that directs the person to the Internet bank. All other parties list account numbers but offer no direct links. Three years after the 2011 elections nothing has changed on the donation part.

Two (EER and EKRE) of eight parties had a forum but to access the information and make actions a registration was needed. Thesis author did not make the registration because it seemed to be for a very specific interest group. Although forum seems to be a good way of making two-way conversation, the thesis author believes that at current time it is better to focus on Social Media, because most people are there already.

Three (EÜV, EIP and IRL) websites have RSS possibility, although IRL RSS link in the footer just reloads the main page again. EIP has a proper explanation how to use different RSS links for different feeds.

Three (EIP, SDME and IRL) websites have newsletter possibility. On EIP and SMDE homepages the visitor can insert her/his e-mail address to sign up for the newsletter. IRL just has their news, named “Newsletter” (in Estonian “Uudiskiri”), where no sign-up possibility is present (at least thesis author did not find it on the page). SMDE newsletter form is quite good – it even suggest to become a newsletter subscriber if you scroll over a certain point on the page. It seems that the parties are not very interested in sending out newsletters.

Three (SDME, REFORM and KESK) websites have proper feedback forms and they are in focus also on the homepage.

4.2.4 Links to other environments and invitations to e-vote

Links to other environments show also how interactive the homepage is and which latest trends are used. Forums are thought to be a good communication channel for two-way conversation between the party/candidates and potential voters, although currently only two parties out of eight use it and they are also restricted (registration is needed to see even the forum content). Thesis author thinks that at present it is better to focus on Social Media, because people are there already and most of the time content viewers don't have to be even signed up to view the channel.

EER, IRL, KESK, SDME and REFORM (half of the parties) had directions to the candidates homepages or blogs. KESK old homepage that was active on the first half of March 2014, the main page gives information about party members blogs and in the focus is Edgar Savisaar blog that is pointed out separately on the right side blog bar and also on the left main slider. On new KESK homepage the party members and candidates news/blog is on the page and there is no focused direction on the blog side to other environments.

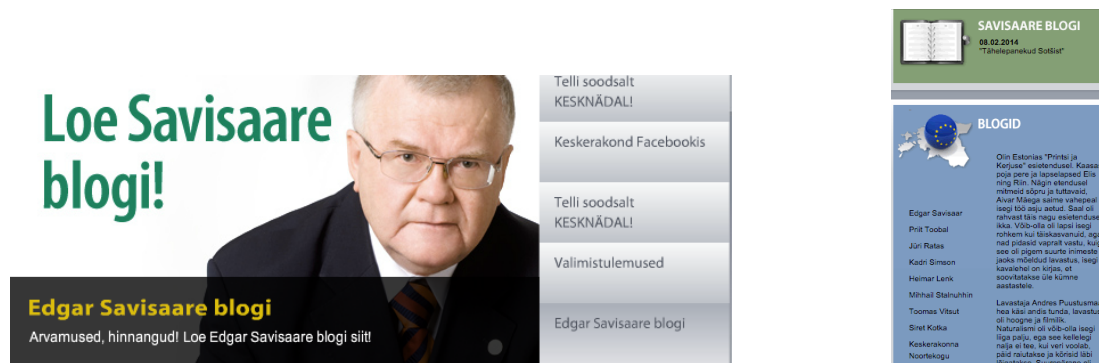


Figure 25 KESK old homepage screenshot

SDME and REFORM party have separate links brought out to candidates blogs or home pages. Mainly they are present on the news section or candidates introduction page.

Facebook, YouTube and Twitter is used by EKRE; KESK, IRL, SMDE, EIP and REFORM (six out of eight). From Social Media channels EER uses only Facebook and links to online news about the candidates. Thesis author found only two links to members Facebook accounts on EVP homepage. EKRE links to online news, young party and other related organisations. KESK links to their newspaper www.kesknadal.ee and the YouTube candidates introduction videos are integrated on their homepage (not direct link). IRL has integrated YouTube videos on their homepage, featuring candidates introduction. On SDME homepage there is quite in focus SDME members Intranet direction. Here is a good point to think who are the page users and what is the overall goal if the focus is to attract electors and/or interested parties that are not related directly to the party. EIP had lots of links to Social Media channels – LinkedIn, Pinterest, additionally to the list that was brought up earlier. It seems that here are too many links and what is the goal of all the links remains a question, because seems that the users are not using them. REFORM had the most links to Social Media. Additionally to Facebook, Twitter and YouTube they had Vimeo, Instagram and Pinterest, links that were brought up at the bottom of every story/news. The realisation was good and it seems that the focus is in order – first the story and then the Social Media links.

Three parties (IRL, SMDE and REFORM) had the invitation to e-vote present. Some parties (for example EKRE and KESK) have stated that e-voting is not secure and they suggest

people to go vote on paper – this could also be a reason why some parties don't push electors to e-vote. Also it depends on what is the target group of the party and how the potential electors are used to vote or want to vote.

SMDE campaign page had in some point very focused button that directed people to e-vote.

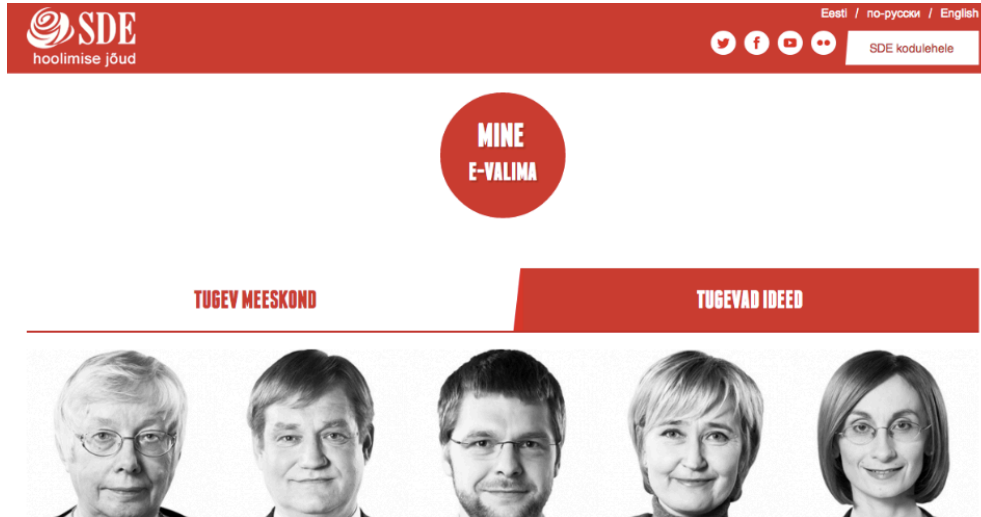


Figure 26 SDME campaign page screenshot

Also REFORM brought out e-vote possibility and for example put to the e-vote direction former Prime Minister and EEPE2014 main candidate picture.



Figure 27 REFOR homepage screenshot

Overall e-vote linking is currently not that popular. Only 25% of the parties that participate in the elections do it.

4.2.5 The descriptions of the parties' campaign elements and messages

Eestimaa Ühendatud Vasakpartei (EÜV)

EÜV page is static and the latest web technologies or trends are not used. The page is not mobile friendly. It is hard to understand what are the parties color symbolics – is it green or is it pink or some other color remains a question. Standard fonts are used and there is no attention to typography. It does not come out what is the focus of the page – it seems that the news are the main focus. There is no EEPE2014 election related information. On the May 2014 post there is a picture and a number of one candidate, but for an average visitor it remains unclear what it is for. When clicking on the picture it enlarges the picture and this is it.

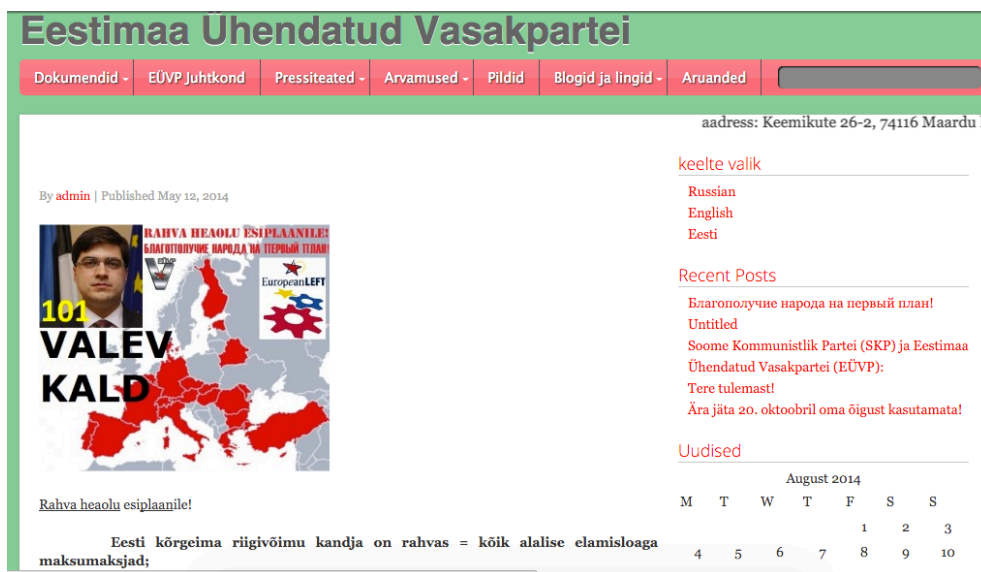


Figure 28 EÜV homepage screenshot

Overall the homepage is out of date in design and UX perspective. It does not contain election related information.

Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond (SDME)

SDME had two homepages – one was a special page for EEPE2014

(<http://euro2014.sotsdem.ee/>).

The special page for the EEPE2014 had a good structure and the info was easy to find. Party colors were also used in a good manner and the elector should easily get the feeling that it is SDME and not some other party page. The page was multilingual (EST, ENG and RUS) and the language changing buttons were easy to find. Also on the top right corner the Social Media links (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Flickr) were brought out, together with the



Figure 29 SDME campaign page screenshot

direct link to SDME main homepage – this info was also on the page footer, on right side. Candidates, their team and their strong ideas, seem to be the main focus. It seems that “Strong team” and “Strong ideas” is the message to electors. The election program is easy to find. SDME also brought up European Manifestation of the Social Democrats of Europe. Below the candidates and election program is the news feed link. Short descriptions of three news summaries are shown and if there is a wish to see the whole news or other news, then it is easy to get the needed info. The SDME special page is focused and the less important info is hidden on the first stage or not used at all. Calendar link directs to the main homepage that has a little bit different design and navigation logic. The latest web technologies are in use and the page is responsive. It can be used with different devices and screens. It seems that the page is built by a professional web designer and the photography used is professional as well. The candidates have their introduction in text and on video. Social Media links, candidates homepage or blog links and their contacts details are present. Before the elections there was in focus also direction to e-voting. A feedback form for suggestions or questions was provided. Overall the page is logical, contains election info and all the info is easy to find. A visitor will have a positive emotion when visiting the page.

SDME main homepage (www.sotsdem.ee) looks different from the dedicated election page and has a bit different UX and navigation logic. The latest web trends are not present. There is more info and the info is not so focused like it was on the special election page. For example, there are 11 points (links) on the main menu bar, which feels a little bit too much. It seems that the page is used for party members limited access also, because on the top of the right corner there is a link to Intranet. The main page has in focus news, joining the party, calendar, blogs, picture gallery and Facebook. The footer also has lots of info – maybe little bit too much. The main SMDE page is not responsive and it is not easy and convenient to use with different devices and screens.

For example SDME main page upper selection:

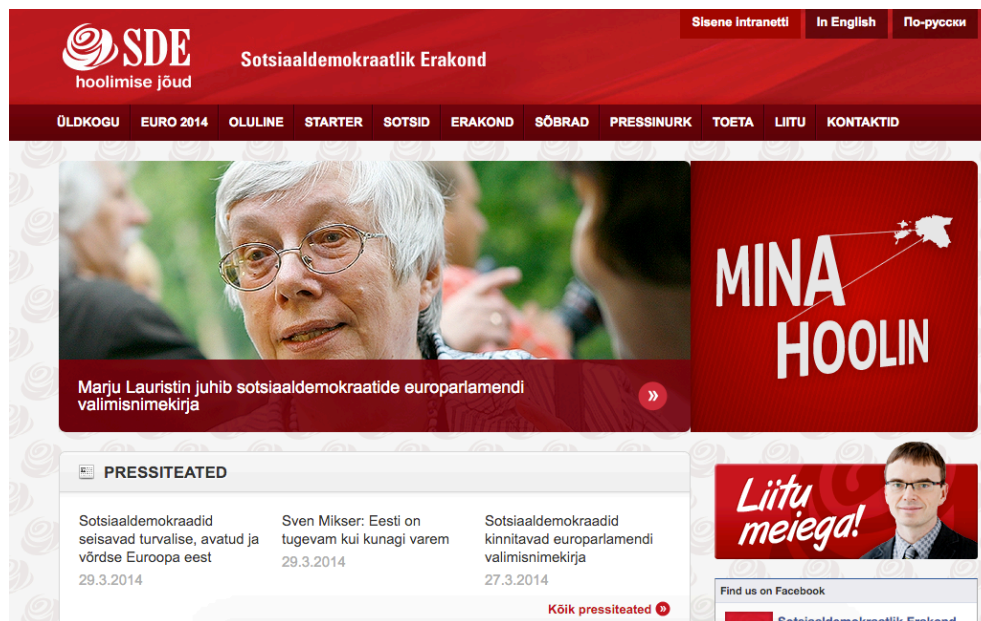


Figure 30 SDME homepage screenshot

For example SDME main page center selection:

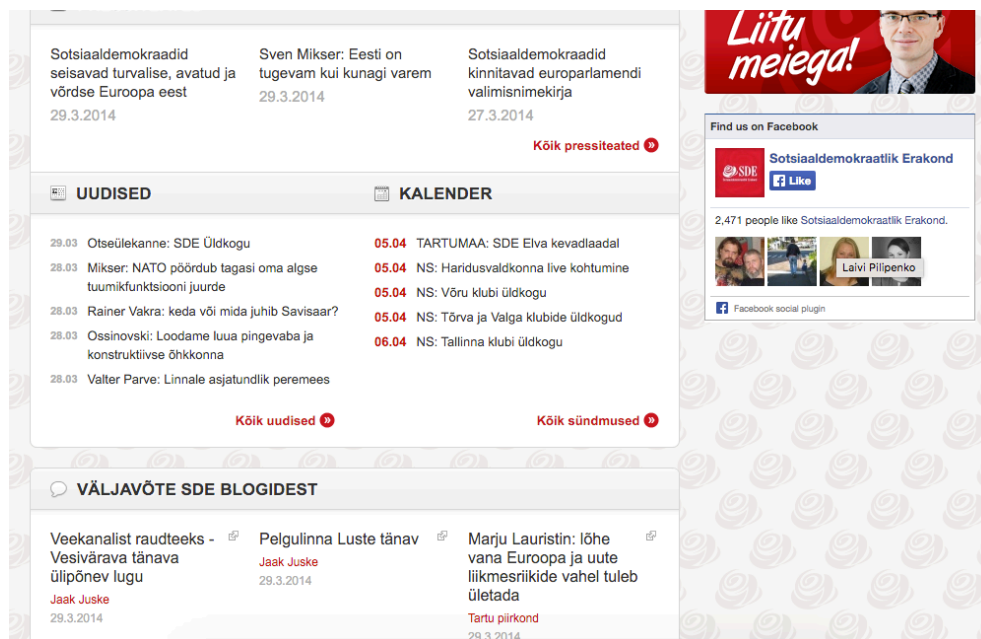


Figure 31 SDME homepage screenshot

SDME page has a good feature regarding the newsletter. If the page user scrolls down, then at some point the newsletter signing box appears. If users move up, then the box disappears. This is a good point, because if the user wants to see the whole page then it indicates that the user is somewhat deeper interested in the party and it is wise to suggest to receive periodical news about the party.

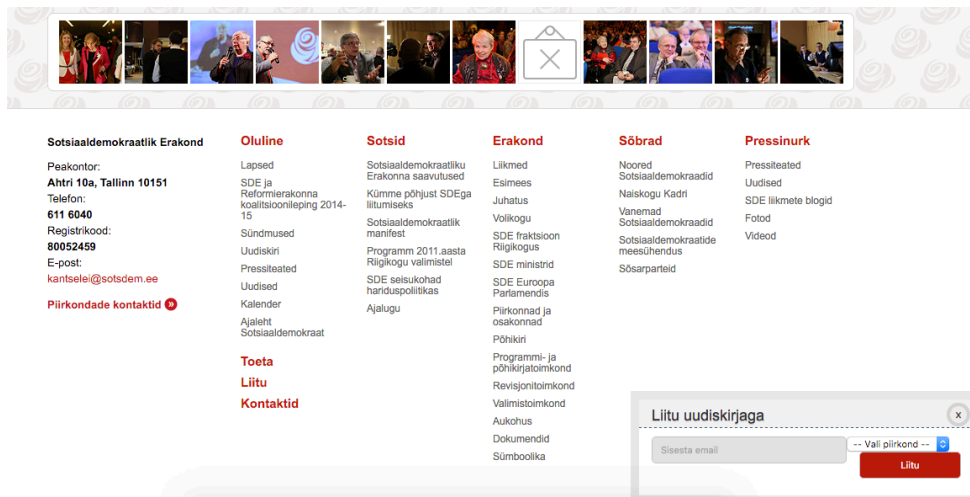


Figure 32 SDME homepage screenshot

Overall SDME had two pages, where one page was with good design, focus and usability, but the main page felt little bit outdated.

Erakond Eestimaa Rohelised (EER)

EER page is static and the latest web technologies and trends are not in use. The design does not give a professional impression. The pictures of the candidates are also not made by a professional photographer. The page is not responsive and it is not suitable to use on different devices or screens. The page is meant for personal computer use. Page is simple and little bit out of date from design perspective. It seems that the EER party color is green, but the branding could be better.



Figure 33 EER homepage screenshot

It seems that the page main focus is news, how to help the party and the EEPE2014, though the last part could be presented better.



Figure 34 EER homepage screenshot

Info about the candidates is also presented for on the next screen where is candidate number and info about the candidate. Below that is candidate number, name and then 5 minute interview that was recorded by the national TV channel (ETV) and put to their homepage.

It is unclear what is the election message from the party and from the candidates on the basis of the info presented on the website. Also the campaign elements are unclear.

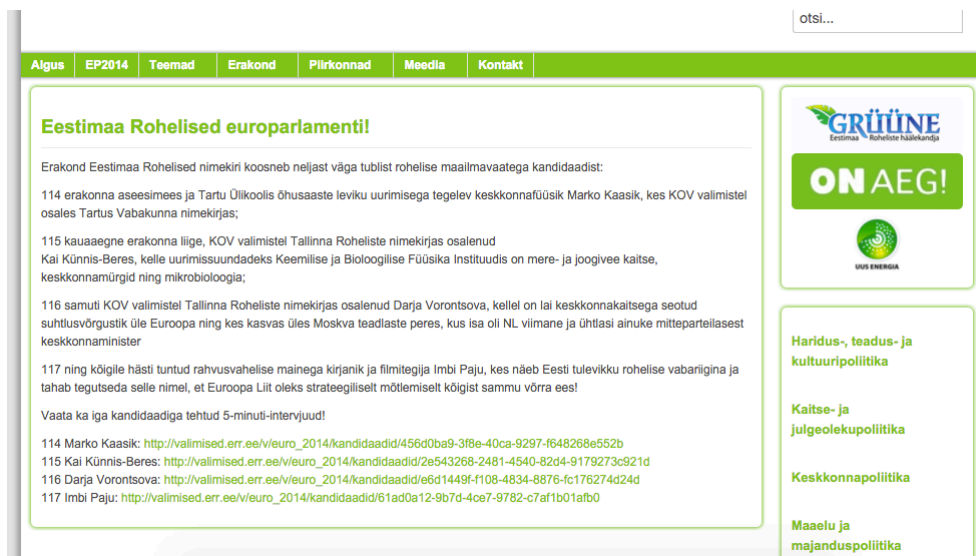


Figure 35 EER homepage screenshot

Overall the page is simple but out of date on the design and UX part. Election info is presented, but it could be done better. Also the campaign elements are missing and the overall election message is unclear.

Erakond Isamaa ja Res Publica Liit (IRL)

IRL had one homepage but in May an extra layer appeared on top of the homepage, when www.irl.ee URL was entered. The extra layer contained the EEPE2014 information about election platform link, info about the candidates (pictures, videos, Social Media channels links, CV etc.) and time counter to election day. The election layer message was “Less corruption – a higher standard of living” and it also contained a link to e-voting at the end of the election time (it means that the info layer content changed in time). Thesis author understood that the main message for this election was the same, although on the EEPE2014 IRL election platform it states on the first page “Ajame Eesti asja” (in translation: “We are for Estonia”). If there was a need to go to the main homepage, then the layer could be closed on the top right corner. The election layer was well structured and info was in focus and easy to understand. Logo and IRL color elements were also present. It was plain and simple but it worked. The downside was that it was not that responsive – on mobile devices the view was not convenient to use.



Figure 36 IRL homepage screenshot

IRL homepage has quite good structure and the info is quite easy to find. There should be more focus – the topics that are not that important don't need to be on the first page. Election seemed to be in focus. Party colors are also used in a good manner. The page is multilingual (EST, ENG and RUS) and the language changing buttons are easy to find (on the top right corner). On the right side there are three quick buttons for supporting, becoming a member and feedback – the buttons are built in the page frame, which means the buttons are in every IRL page. Homepage has Twitter feed and Facebook link where the fan count and pictures of the fans are visible. The main banner contains candidates pictures, names and links to certain candidates. There are four smaller banners that put the attention on certain topics – for example on one of the banners was EEPE2014 main candidate Tunne Kelams picture and text “Stop Putin”. Smaller banner contents change in time. Below of the main banner and smaller

banners are news and blog section, events, “pictures and videos” and area map. The website is not responsive – it does not work well on different screens and devices.

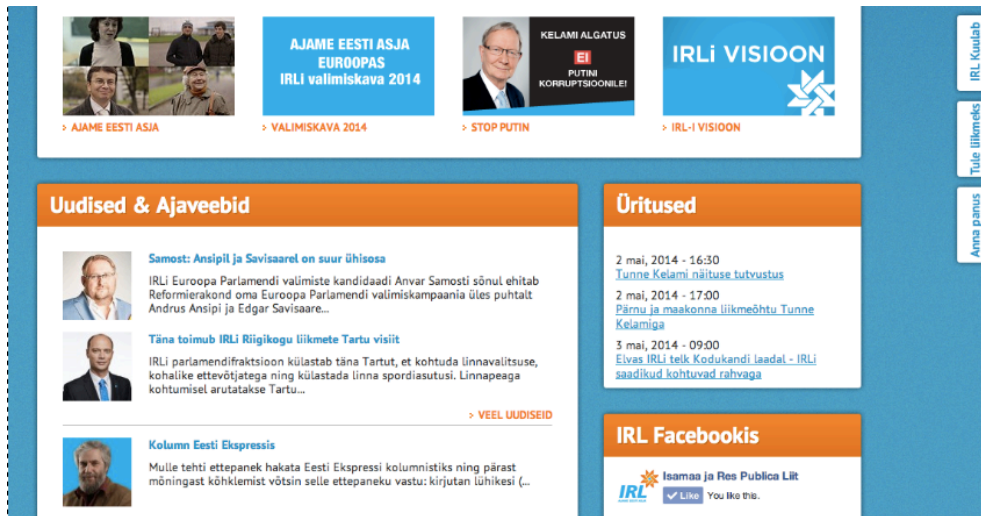


Figure 37 IRL homepage screenshot

The homepage footer is also a little bit too big to show all the info. Below the screen there is a “Log in” button – it seems that the homepage is used for party members also.

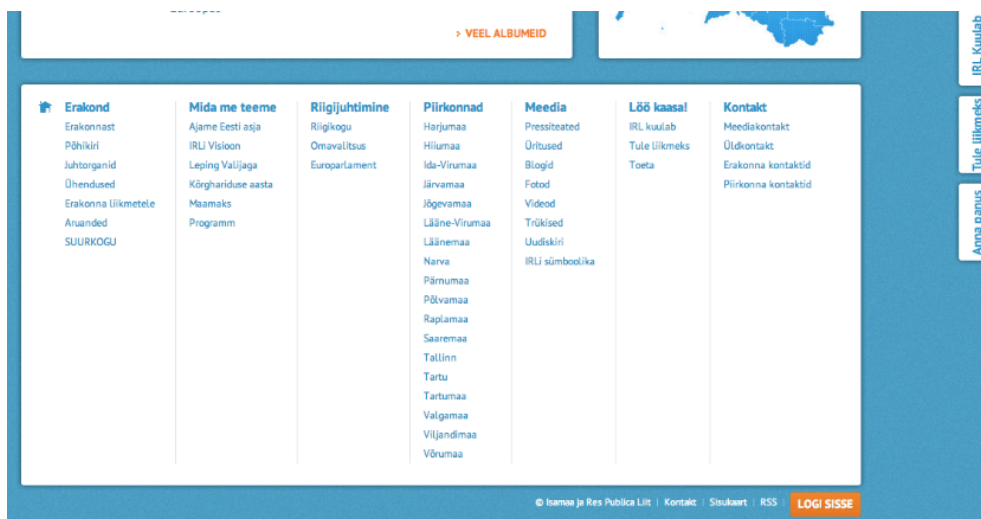


Figure 38 IRL homepage screenshot

Newsletter is a separate section and thesis author did not find a place where he could sign up for it.



Figure 39 IRL homepage screenshot

Overall the page is simple but it contains too much info and the focus is lacking. On design and UX part better solutions could be found. The election info is presented and info is easy to find. Although it is a little bit unclear what the main campaign message is.

Eesti Keskerakond (KESK)

KESK had their old homepage up to the first half of March 2014 and a new from the second half of March.

On the old homepage the EEPE2014 menu button was present. The website is in Estonian and Russian. On the right side the blogs are brought to focus. On the left side five banners about actual topics could be seen and below that news, blogs, pictures and videos. Page is out of date in design and UX. The website is not very responsive.



Figure 40 KESK old homepage screenshot

An interesting discovery was that from 19th to 23th of March the homepage displayed next screen that said that KESK is sorry about the situation because the homepage is under maintenance. The problem lasted for 5 days until the new homepage was put in its place.

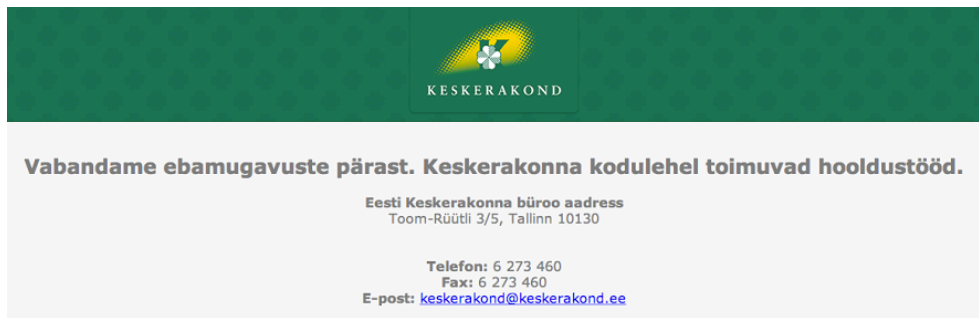


Figure 41 KESK homepage "not working" screenshot

KESK new homepage is better than the previous one. It is well structured and the info is easy to find. Focus is good (on the main menu there are six points). The big main banner that changes picture brings the needed data to focus. During the election time it was mainly about the candidates and the EERE2014. News and press releases are on the new homepage also in focus. In the old version the direction to blogs was brought out separately, this is now not available and all the info about the candidates or party members is in the News and Press Releases sections. On the right side of the homepage is the EEPE2014 related info, upcoming events and elections videos where the YouTube videos are integrated into the homepage. The homepage is responsive and works well on different devices and screens. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube links are in the page footer. The Twitter link does not work and the direction to Twitter is not made. The main message for the elections is "Rahu" ("Peace"). It is presented on the homepage but could be brought more into focus. The party colors are used on the page and it seems that a professional web designer was employed in designing the website.

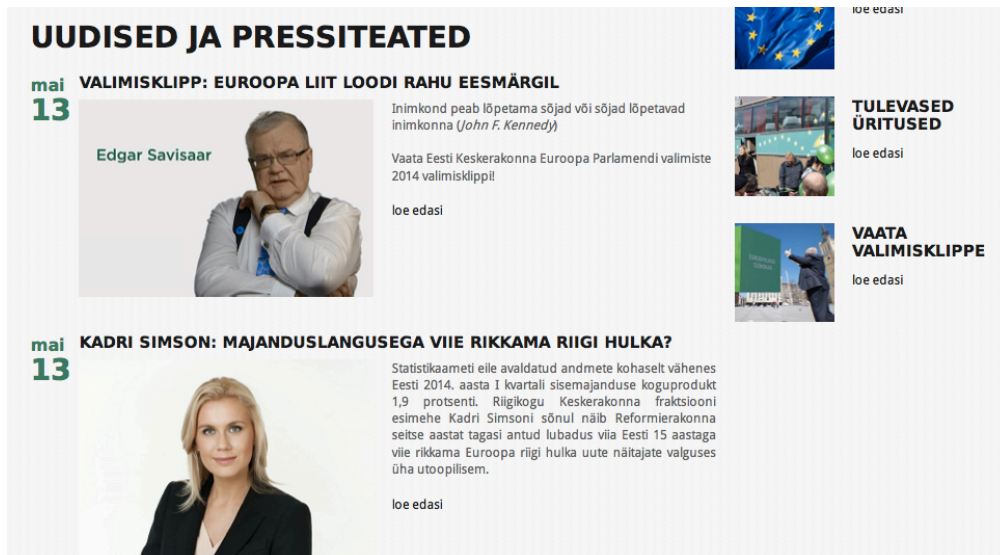


Figure 42 KESK new homepage screenshot

The homepage is simple in a good way. On the main page is mentioned that KESK is the biggest party in Estonia. With a chat button a possibility to give feedback or suggestions is present. Near the footer the KESK main goals and picture gallery are visible.

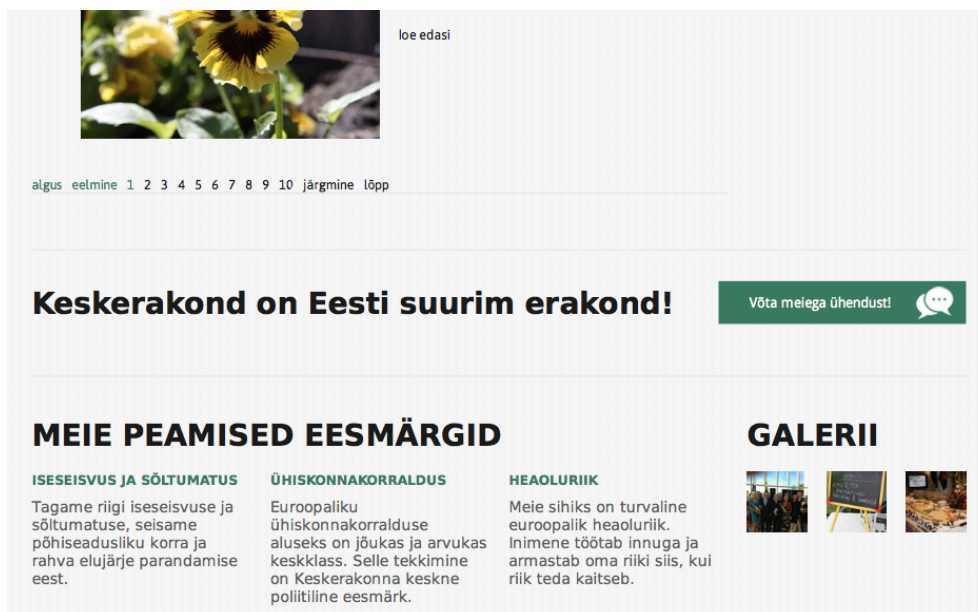


Figure 43 KESK new homepage screenshot

Overall the KESK homepage is well structured, info is easy to find, the page is focused on the main topics. Design and UX is good and the site is responsive. The election info was presented also, though the election message should have been used more.

Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond (EKRE)

EKRE had two homepages – one was a special page for the EEPRE2014 (<http://eurovalimised.ekre.ee/>) that was introduced in May 2014.

The dedicated page for the EEPRE2014 had a good structure and the info could be found easily. Most of the links on the page directed to the main homepage. From usability perspective it is not good, because the UX of the main homepage is different. The Party colors were used, although not in the way that it is totally clear for the user. The party logo was also not presented. The page was only in Estonian – the party presents national views and this can also be the reason that they don't want to use other languages. Thesis author did not find visible party Social Media directions. Though for the candidates the links and online news directions were presented. The site was responsive.

It seems that from design point of view there was not so professional web designer, because the overall view does not look very professional. The pictures of the candidates did not give a particularly professional impression. It seems that the party had a limited budget to spend on their website.

The special page had maybe a little too big banner where the focus on the candidates was presented. On the banner was a direct link for extra information about a candidate and every banner layer contained also a link to the platform – link to the platform on every candidates picture is good idea because it brings the party election principal to the main focus.

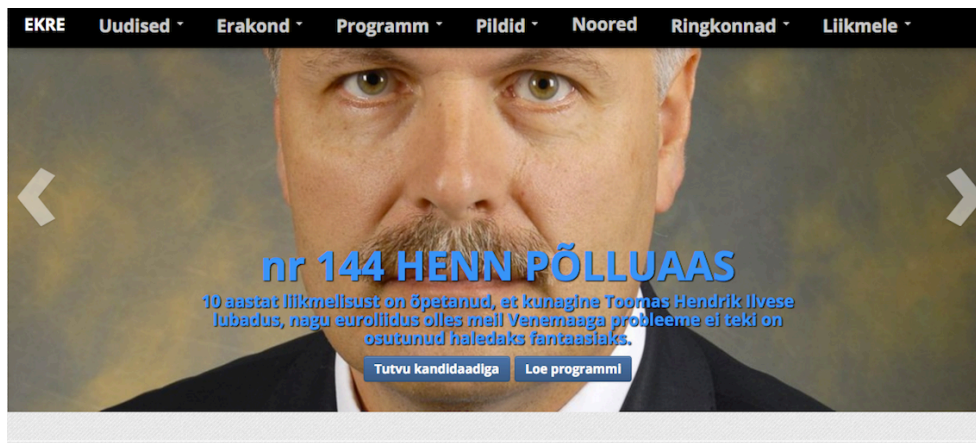


Figure 44 EKRE homepage screenshot

On the center of the page was a media coverage section with pictures and when clicking on them there was direction to YouTube, to some news channels or to some other channels. On the media coverage section it is very clear that party election messages are in focus. Interesting part is also that donation to the party info is in focus. Information regarding the

bank account for the donations is presented. Below the donation table is information about the upcoming events of the party.

The screenshot displays the EKRE homepage with several key sections:

- Toeta eestimeelset poliitikat:** A blue box containing text about supporting Estonian politics and contact information for the party's bank accounts (SEB and Swedbank).
- Kohtumine Lasnamäe Lindakivi Kultuurikeskuses:** A blue box announcing a meeting on May 19, 2014, from 19:00 to 21:00.
- Vaata meediakajastust:** A section titled "Watch media coverage" featuring four video thumbnails:
 - Martin Helme speaking at a podium: "Meie Eesti eest, rahvusriikide Euroopa eest!"
 - Martin Helme in a suit: "ERR Valimised: 142 Martin Helme"
 - Mart Helme at a podium: "ERR Valimised: 143 Mart Helme"
 - Jaak Madison smiling: "ERR Valimised: 146 Jaak Madison"

Figure 45 EKRE homepage screenshot

Below the site are links to EKRE speeches. Mainly they are links to the main homepage.

The screenshot shows the main content area of the EKRE homepage:

- Loe meie sõnavõtte:** A section titled "Read our speeches" with four news items:
 - Läti uudised rahvuslikust vaatevinklist: jaanuar-märts:** Discusses recent events in Latvia and Estonia's foreign policy stance. Includes a "Loe edasi..." link.
 - Jaak Madison: Punakollase koalitsiooni prioriteetidest:** Discusses the priorities of the coalition government. Includes a "Loe edasi..." link.
 - Pöördumine Riigikogu liikmete poole seoses Eesti-Vene piirleppega:** Discusses the Estonian-Russian border agreement. Includes a "Loe edasi..." link.
 - Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond kutsub inimesi riigikogu ette protestima Eesti-Vene piirlepingu ratifitseerimise vastu:** Calls for a protest against the ratification of the border agreement. Includes a "Loe edasi..." link.
- Footer:** © 2014 Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond and a link to "Algusesse".

Figure 46 EKRE homepage screenshot

The main homepage has the same main menu buttons as the dedicated homepage for the elections. The page header has Facebook and YouTube links and also a search bar. The party logo and colors are presented. On the left side are directions to make a donation and to become a party member. Below that is a link directing to the forum and forum registration – forum content is only presented to registered members. The structure is simple and info is easy to find. It seems that the homepage is not made by a professional web designer – design seems a little out of date. The site is not responsive and does not work properly on different screens and devices – the site is meant only for desktop use. The European platform is presented in text format and it can not be saved in PDF format.



Figure 47 EKRE homepage screenshot

Overall EKRE had two homepages where the special election page was responsive and more focused than the main page that was not very responsive and its design looked out of date. The main message did not come out like it should, but info about the candidates and their views were presented.

Eesti Reformierakond (REFORM)

REFORM homepage has a good structure and the info is easy to find. The different topics are in focus and the less important info noise is reduced – on this part it is a good site.

The election is in focus on the main menu and also on the main banners and in the news feed. The election message is “Kindlalt” (in translation it is “Definitely”) and it was presented in a good manner. The home page is responsive and it is good to use on the different screens and devices. The REFORM logo is brought out and the party colors are nicely presented on the page. The homepage has professional candidates pictures where on the background are the stars of the EU flag. The homepage is made by a professional web designer and it feels that UX is also thought through. There is also a clever tag system to search different news (the option is hidden and if page user wants to perform an advanced search then it is possible). Overall page search is also made easy.

The main menu is located on the left side of the screen, not like other parties that had the main menu on the top.

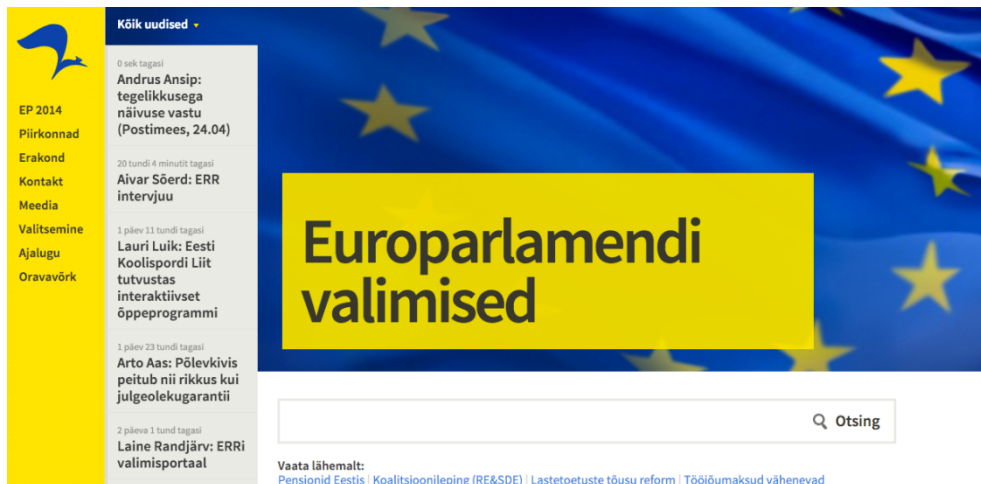


Figure 48 REFORM homepage screenshot

REFORM homepage contact menu point is structured in a good way. The structure is logical and all the contact info and availability is brought out.

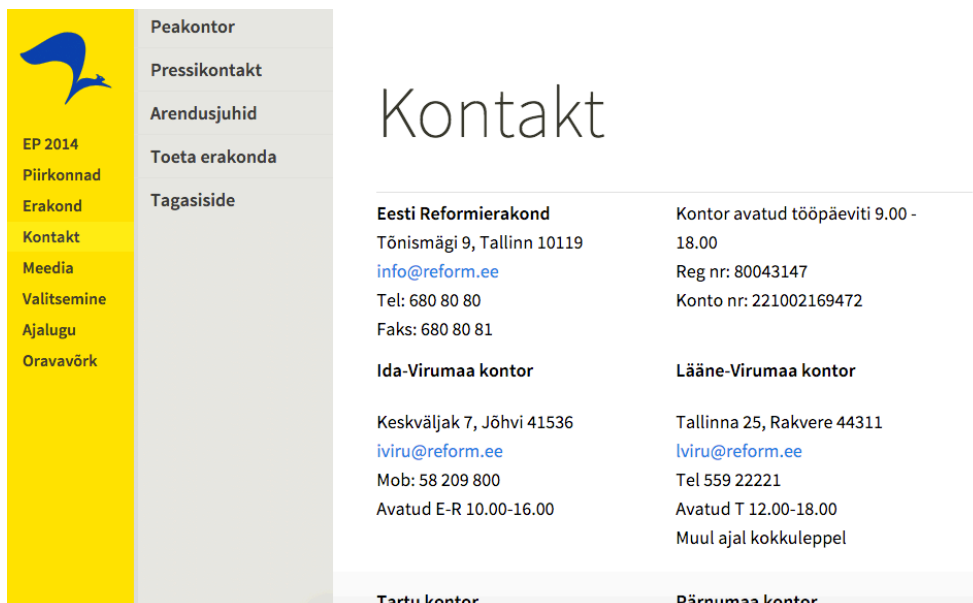


Figure 49 REFORM homepage screenshot

The donation possibility is made very easy, where one can choose the amount of money to donate and the bank link to make the payment.

Reformierakonnale!

Leides endas veelgi enam motivatsiooni meid toetada, saad Sa seda teha ka rahaliselt.

Annetusi saavad teha ainult füüsilised isikud, ülekande tegemisel tuleb kindlasti märkida selgituse lahtrisse oma isikukood ja nimi.

Määra summa *

€ 10 € 25 € 50

€ 100 € 250 € 500

Muu summa

Anneta

[↑ Tagasi üles](#)

Figure 50 REFORM homepage screenshot

The homepage has Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Vimeo, Instagram and Pinterest link directions and they are present on every page. The links are located in every page at the bottom of the page content (not the footer). REFORM has on the homepage most social media directions of all the EERE2014 parties and they are made visible in a good way. Also the direction to become a member is provided and there is a live count of the members number.

6 päeva 21 tundi tagasi
Laine Randjärv:
Riigikogu Soome-
ugri toetusrühma
esimeheks sai Laine
Randjärv

1 / 304 ▶

Facebook Twitter Youtube Vimeo Instagram Pinterest

13004 liiget. [Liitu sinagi](#).

Usud Eestisse? [Toeta Reformierakonda](#).

Reformierakond

Tõnismägi 9, Tallinn 10119
info@reform.ee
Tel: 680 80 80
Konto nr: EE532200221002169472

©2013 Eesti Reformierakond

Figure 51 REFORM homepage screenshot

One interesting point on REFORM homepage was that REFORM compared their top candidate Andrus Ansip with KESK top candidate Edgar Savisaar. It was brought out that

Andrus Ansip is Estonian minded and Edgar Savisaar Russian minded. Also that Andrus does sport and Edgar just sits on the sofa and watches TV. From the commercial it seems that there is negative tone against KESK party and pointing out that they are bad and REFORM is good. Some time later this comparison was deleted and it could not be found on the page history part either.



Figure 52 REFORM homepage screenshot

Overall REFORM homepage had a good structure and the info was easy to found. Election message “Kindlalt” came out nicely. Candidates were also nicely introduced and the EERE2014 was in focus on the homepage.

Eesti Iseseisvuspartei (EIP)

EIP homepage has a not so clear structure but the info can be found. The page is not responsive and it is not convenient to use on different screens and devices. The party logo is presented on the top of the page and it is not clear that the party colors are used. Thesis author did not find the election message and no introduction about the candidates. The page has too much text and it is hard to understand what is in focus. It seems that the main focus is on news/notifications/press releases. A professional web designer and UX expert is not used – the overall impression suggests the use of a existing web template. There are many Social

Media links (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter etc.) but it is unclear what is the goal of that, because the links are put to the page quite chaotically and the end goal is not clear – too much links and info can become confusing for the page user. One good point is that page visitor can sign up for the newsletter by entering her/his e-mail address. One interesting point is that users can leave a comment to different posts and pages, the pages of other parties are lacking this kind of option.

Overall EIP homepage is simple but the structure and design could be better. Also there is no focus on the page and the website can not be used on different devices. Newsletter and comment options are present and good features that make the info flow better.

4.2.6 General evaluation of the websites

Five parties had homepages only in Estonian and three parties had in Estonian, English and Russian language. The donation possibilities were present on seven party websites out of eight (only EÜV did not have the donation possibility). REFORM had the best donation possibility for the site users, where the donation could be given through a bank link. The election platforms were also presented by seven parties out of eight (only EÜV did not have the election platform presented). Candidate introductions was present on the homepages of six parties out of eight (EÜV and EIP did not have this feature). Links to e-vote had three parties of eight (SME, IRL and REFORM had links to e-vote). Some kind of interactivity had five parties of eight (EÜV, EER and EIP were basically static pages). REFORM homepage stood out from other party pages because the main homepage was well structured, info easy to find, page was responsive, the election message was presented and it was made by skilled web designer. SDME dedicated page was also good because it was focused, had a good design and gave a good overview about the candidates. KESK released a new homepage during the election time and it was a definite step up from their previous website – the info was focused and it had a better design than before. SDME, REFORM and KESK had a proper feedback form. Out of eight parties only EER and EKRE had a forum but it was restricted to review the content without becoming a member of the forum. On the homepages no debate possibilities with candidates and electors was present. Although overall a good election practice is presented on the homepages and there were not that much criticism of the competitors. REFORM did criticize KESK main candidate Edgar Savisaar but all the info about that was removed at some point from REFORM website. All the parties presented a positive side about themselves.

4.3 Campaigns on Official Youth Party Channels

From the eight parties under scrutiny only EÜV and EIP parties don't have youth organizations (or at least the author did not find them on the Internet). EER has a youth organization but from online perspective it seems that they are not that active – EER youth organization has only a Facebook account and they did not present any information about EER2014 or their candidates. EER youth party Facebook last post was from 2011 and if someone wants to join the FB account, then they can be added as a friend only.

EER youth party has a homepage domain name

(<http://www.erakond.ee/eestimaarohelised/noored-rohelised>) but the home page does not exist

- “Not found” is shown. KESK has a youth organization and a homepage plus Facebook and Twitter accounts, but they did not support EER2014 or any candidates. KESK youth organization was also not that active overall in online media. EKRE has youth organization and they have a homepage and a Facebook page, but no Twitter account. EKRE youth organization did support EERE2014 elections and also mainly EKRE's young candidate (Jaak Madisson) who was participating in the election. EKRE youth party name is “Sinine Äratus” (in translation: “Blue Awakening”) - because of the name difference from main party name it is harder to find from Internet search engines. SDME, IRL and REFORM do have youth parties and their respective homepages plus Facebook and Twitter accounts, and they did support the candidates and the EERE2014 elections. REFORM youth party has good homepage structure but the design and UX is quite simple. It seems that not much effort was put into the creation of the homepage, but it works and the info is easy to find. From EERE2014 perspective there was not that much coverage of the elections or the candidates. Their Twitter account has two tweets in total and some meetings with EER2014 REFORM second candidate Kaja Kallas received some coverage.

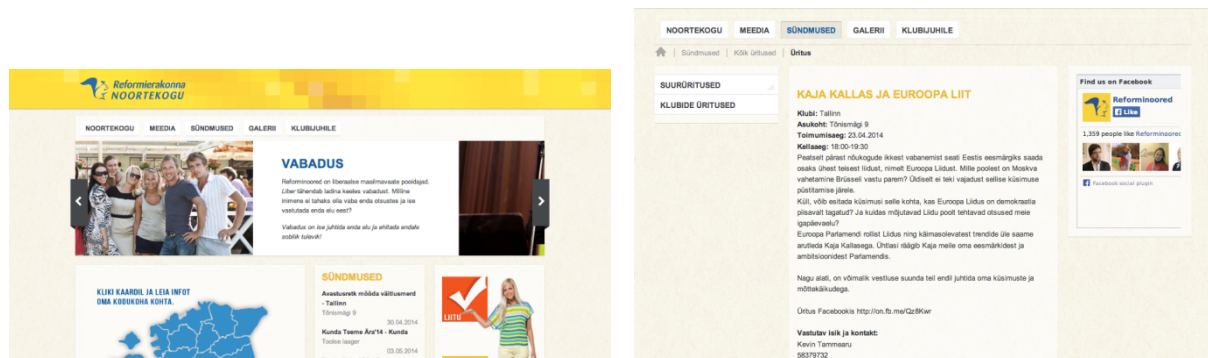


Figure 53 REFORM youth party homepage screenshot

Links to both REFORM party main homepage and BLOG are present in the footer. EERE2014 candidate Kaja Kallas meeting event is brought out in the homepage but in the footer there is no link to her blog. EERE2014 candidate Arto Aas blog link is brought out though.



Figure 54 REFORM youth party homepage footer screenshot

IRL youth party page is well structured and it looks up do date from design point of view, certainly in comparison with other youth party homepages. On IRL youth party homepage it clearly states that it supports EERE2014 elections and all the attention goes to candidate named Linda Eichler who is also a member of IRL youth party. Linda Eichler writes opinion stories and other posts on the page. The points of view of the young candidate are given full attention as well.

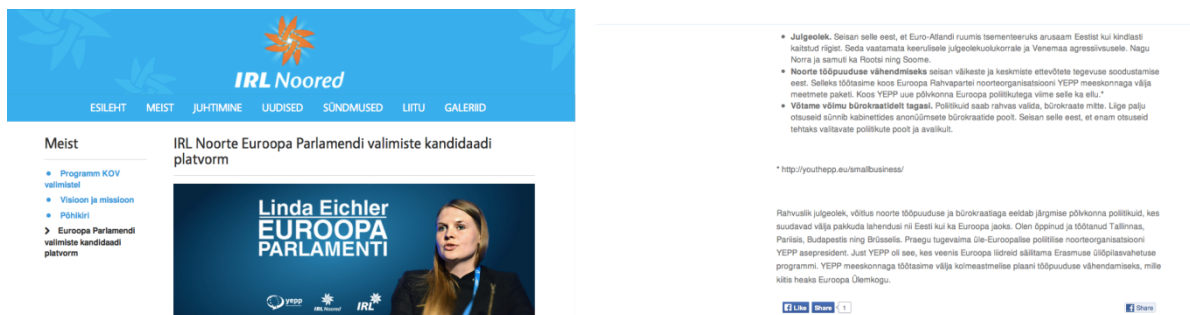


Figure 55 IRL youth party homepage screenshot

Facebook and Twitter feeds are presented on the homepage in the footer. The calendar with upcoming events also present.

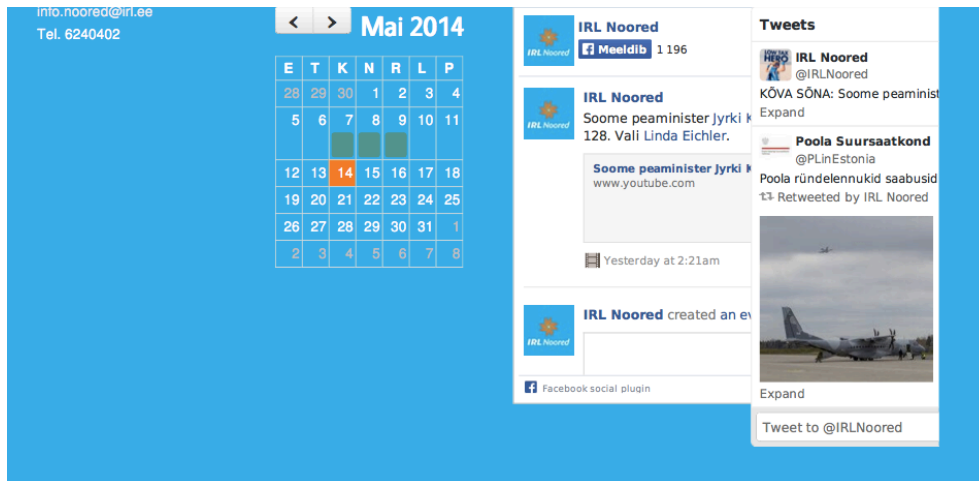


Figure 56 IRL youth party homepage screenshot

SDME youth party support went mainly to one young candidate – Liina Raud. The homepage included supportive banners. For example one banner declared that a change of the old “Iron” for the new “Iron” (Liina’s last name is “Raud”, in translation “Iron”) is needed. Overall the homepage design was simple and info was easy to find. Events calendar, blog posts, Facebook, Flickr and YouTube were also in focus.

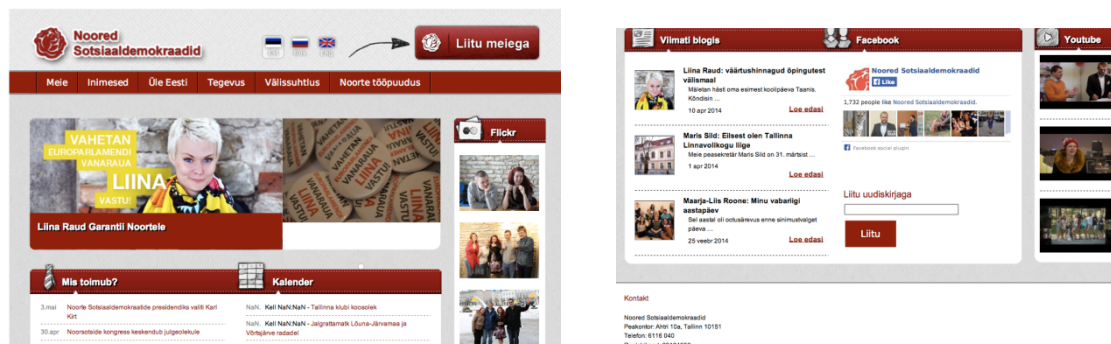


Figure 57 SMDE youth party homepage screenshot

Overall four young parties out of eight supported the EER2014 elections and candidates. SDME and IRL young party stood out from others because they had taken into focus supporting their young candidates (IRL – Liina Eichler, SDME – Liina Raud).

4.4 Party and Independent Candidates Campaigns in Online Media

This point will give an overview of the coverage of the campaigns of the parties and independent candidates in online media in March, April and May 2014.

This author did not find any online news coverage for 18 candidates out of 88 (21 % of the EERE2014 candidates). Seven from 18 were EKRE candidates and five from 18 independent candidates. IRL candidate Tunne Kelam had the most online news but these were not election related news, predominating those were other political news. Tunne Kelam had 19 election related news, 52 political news and 4 private news. It seems that Tunne Kelam had a good team as different online newspapers published the same news. This is a good approach, because if you have good content then it is important to use many different channels that may have different target groups to reach the potential elector. Independent candidate Kristiina Ojuland had focus on election related news (in March 19, in April 9 and in May 11). It seems that Kristiina started her campaign quite early. Indrek Tarand got elected in the previous Estonian European Parliament elections and he had a tactic that in the last campaign month contained the main body of news and the focus was on election information (during the month of May 21 election related news and only 3 political and 1 private news). Most election related news in March were about Kristiina Ojuland (19 news), in April about Edgar Savisaar (20 news) – 17 news items regarding Silver Meikar and in May regarding Indrek Tarand. Most political related news in March were about Tunne Kelam (17 news) and about Urmas Paet (15 news). In April about Kristiina Ojuland (23 news) and in May about Tunne Kelam (12 news). In the online news field it became visible what was written from the journalist side and what had been created by the teams of the candidates. Presented were party views, views of individual candidates and also some sort of news or stories that tried to present the candidate more “human” and accessible. Also comparisons about parties and about candidates (for example REFORM and IRL presented negative info about KESK and about KESK main candidate Edgar Savisaar) were present. Relatively extensive coverage was received by stories and events that got the attention of the media and were presented by different news channels (for example Abdul Turay and his guitar, Silver Meikar “BussiRiot” trip, Anvar Samost presenting a poster where KESK main candidate Edgar Savisaar is kissing Putin, together with the slogan “No to corruption” etc.).

What is written about the candidates is of paramount importance and also is important what media (pictures and/or videos) is used. For example independent candidate Indrek Tarand used in during his campaigning a yellow sweater to stand out more from the other candidates.



Figure 58 Screenshots of Indrek Tarand from online newspapers

Independent candidate Silver Meikar managed to perform good marketing in the beginning of the campaign. Different newspapers wrote that Meikar is requires funding to be one of the EERE2014 candidate – the needed EERE2014 candidate registration fee. It got in the online media extensive media coverage. At the time there were unstable times in Ukraine and media said that Russia invaded the country. Because of that there were many news items about the situation in Ukraine and about Estonian security. Silver Meikar used the situation in his advantage and did the “Bussi Riot” happening, where Meikar bought a bus and traveled around Estonia with his team.



Figure 59 Silver Meikar screenshots from online newspapers

SDME candidate Abdul Turay shared in online media a video where Turay talked about a guitar that belonged to his wife’s grandfather and he fixed the guitar because it was broken. The so called hidden message was that sometimes someone from outside is needed to change

things for the better. Also that the guitar is a piece of Estonian history and lets protect it together. The video was in English and in Estonian. It was a bit different approach to play more on electors emotions.



Figure 60 Abdul Turay online newspaper screenshot

IRL candidate Anvar Samost presented a poster where KESK main candidate Edgar Savisaar was kissing Putin. The news was presented in different news channels and got excellent coverage. The message of the poster was “No to corruption”. KESK party did answer to the poster that this is not a correct way of presenting SDME political views and in their view SDME did go over the line.



Figure 61 Anvar Samost screenshots from online newspapers

REFORM compared KESK main candidate Edgar Savisaar with REFORM main candidate Andrus Ansip (Ansip was the previous Prime Minister of Estonia). It was revealed in online media that REFORM party had also bought ad space for this in different paper newspapers. This news was presented in different newspapers and got good coverage.



Figure 62 Edgar Savisaar and Andrus Ansip comparison screenshots from online newspapers

Some online news sites featured banners that directed information for certain events. For example it seems that online newspaper Postimees created a banner on the right side of their webpage that directed the debate between KESK candidate Kadri Simson and REFORM candidate Kaja Kallas.



Figure 63 Political event banner screenshot

It seems that several news and stories regarding the candidates were made, although no ads were purchased with the personal budget by the various candidates (for example different kind of banners).

From parties and independent candidates the largest online media news coverage was received by the independent candidates (162 news) with IRL on the second place (147 news). From independent candidates point of view the news amount was decreasing with every passing month. From parties side the biggest coverage was received in April, not in May.

For example there was a banner ad about Urmas Paet with a election message, election number and a party message, but there was no picture of the candidate. On one ad there was just the party name and election message “Kindlalt paremal kursil”.

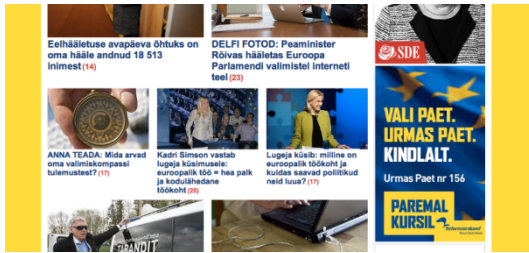


Figure 64 REFORM party banners screenshots

REFORM had a banner that was directing potential electors to read their platform. The banner contained both election and party message. SDME had bought a main banner and on the page background the party color red was used. A link to a video and party message “Tugev Eesti” (in translation “Strong Estonia”) and their party logo. SDME had a small banner that included candidates name, election number and candidate picture, with party logo and colors.



Figure 65 SDME party banners screenshots

An interesting point was that at one point a online newspaper had an error at it, it showed a double ad. SDME used small banners between texts that directed to a video introduction – the banner preview contained a picture of the candidate and candidates name.

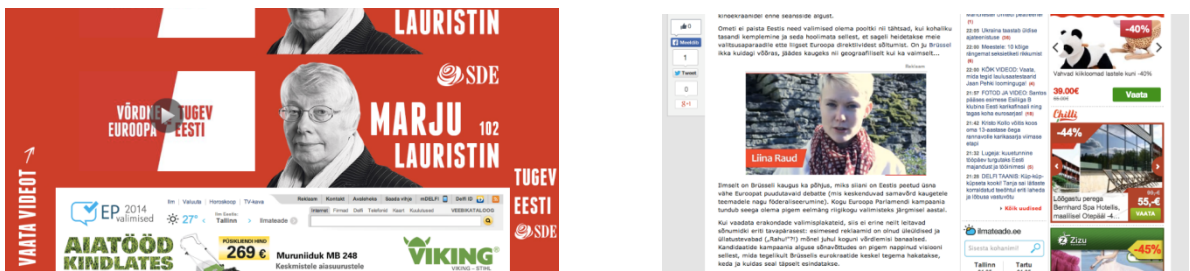


Figure 66 SDME party banners screenshots

IRL had in online newspapers a right side banner that contained a call to action to choose a candidate by e-vote, candidates name, party logo and election number. Also there with similar positioning a banner picturing a 50 EUR note on fire with the party slogan: “Less corruption and higher income”.

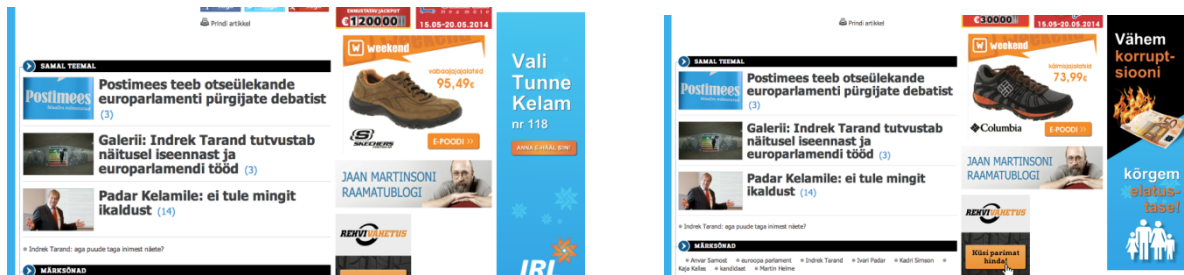


Figure 67 IRL party banners screenshots

On the background IRL had on both sides info about IRL's plan for Estonia and IRL candidate names and numbers with call to action to give a e-vote.



Figure 68 IRL party screenshot

Regarding the side commercials there was on one side a commercial where the content was almost the same. In the example below there is info about IRL's plan for Estonia and call to action for voting for IRL main candidate Tunne Kelam.



Figure 69 IRL party screenshot

KESK has their weekly newspaper that is available both online and in paper form. It is a weekly newspaper. During the election period it contained KESK candidates information. There was news and opinions from the candidates, plus banner ads. The banner ads contained candidate picture, election number, name and the election message “Rahu” (translation: “Peace”). KESK main candidate Edgar Savisaar announced at some point to all media that he is not going to European Parliament, should he get elected. Edgar Savisaar said that he will support his party with the votes that he gets.



Figure 70 KESK party online newspaper screenshot

It is important to bring out that the biggest commercial online news channels Delfi.ee and Postimees.ee had special pages for EERE2014 elections. Those contained candidates introductions (pictures, photos, videos) plus news about the elections, parties and other EERE2014 related topics. Also Estonian national portal ERR.ee had a special page for the EERE2014 elections, where interviews with the candidates, opinions of political experts and other EERE2014 related information was presented.

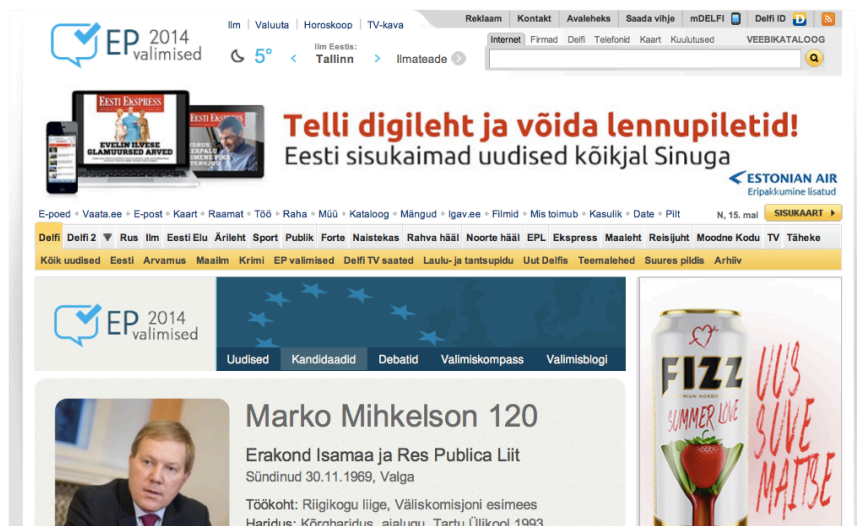


Figure 71 Delfi.ee EERE2014 page screenshot

Overall on EERE2014 elections parties, candidates and their teams did create news for online newspapers and also some promotional happenings that caught the attention of various newspapers and therefore received the required media coverage. The main attention and coverage was received by the main candidates that had party support for organizing the news to the online newspapers. For thesis author IRL candidate Tunne Kelam stood out because he was constantly in the picture and one news item got covered in several newspapers. There were also some parties and candidates (for example REFORM and IRL) which criticized opponents (in cases at hand KESK was being criticized). According to the news national security and a good economical climate were the main topics that were talked about and also how certain party or candidate is going to provide all this to Estonia, should the candidate win the elections.

The candidates did not buy online media ads with their personal budget. It seems that parties supported ad coverage in online media for the candidates and also for the party branding. In current election it seemed that quite a lot was used for videos featuring some party candidate views or commercial clips. Presented were mainly candidate names, election numbers, party logo, party colors and in most cases candidate pictures and party main messages. Form the ads stood out SDME who used the main banner and environment background of a mayor online newspaper where a potential elector could watch a video about the candidate or information regarding a certain candidate was presented. Also IRL presented on a main banner his candidates and the candidates names and numbers with a direct link to e-vote. REFORM party even had banners with a direction to read their platform.

4.5 Candidates Personal Websites (Blogs) as Campaign Tools

This current point will give an overview about candidates blogs statistics and how the communication and campaigning was done through the blogs.

From the 88 candidates 51 had a blog (58% from all candidates). Independent candidates had 11 blogs (5 had none), EIP had 1 blog (6 did none), REFORM had 7 blogs (6 had none), EKRE had 4 blogs (8 had none), KESK had 7 blogs (5 had none) IRL had 10 blogs (2 had none), EER had 2 blogs (2 had none), SDME had 9 blogs (3 had none). EÜV did have one candidate in EERE2014 and he did not have a blog or a homepage. 38 of the homepages/blogs were in Estonian, 8 were multilingual (at least two languages from EST, RUS or ENG), 3 were only in English and 1 was only in Russian. REFORM party candidate Laine Randjärv had the most posts during the election time (of which 3 were election related and 22 were political). Independent candidate Silver Meikar had 23 posts (11 were election related and 12 were political). KESK candidate Mihhail Salluhin had 20 posts (8 were election related and 12 were political). Independent candidate Indrek Tarand had 13 posts (8 were election related, 4 were political and 1 was private). The independent candidates had the most blog posts (65 posts, where 24 were election related).

	SDME	IRL	KESK	EKRE	REFORM	INDEPENDENT
Total posts	34	63	40	14	53	65
Election related (nr)	13	25	18	13	9	24
Election related (%)	38	40	45	93	17	37

Table 2 Parties election related posts overview

Most of the homepages/blogs had a regular web design and party campaigning elements were not present. Also EERE2014 election elements were not present. From web design perspective professional design partners and web developers were not being used. Standard templates and freeware web CMS (content management system) tools were used where the candidate could update the info on the site and not needing extra help from an expert. Most of the times the site was also not responsive and it could not be used easily with different devices and screen sizes. Sites were mostly static and did not have interactive features. From blog perspective it was a good sign that for different news and stories there was present the possibility to add a comment. The page reader did not have to register to view or make a comment. The blogs contained mainly political information, with election information a little bit behind when compared the amount of posts that were made. It is quite difficult to separate what is election related or what is political. Overall can be said that if the candidate will voice

some opinion about something then it will affect also the electors, should the info reach them. Mainly the views on the blogs were personal and not that much party related – although if a certain candidate is in some party then there is by default the mindset that her/his views are similar to overall party views. This could be the reason also why the sites are not in party colors and featuring their logos. Directions to candidates social media channels (for example Twitter or Facebook) were usually present. Some pages contained also a possibility to support the candidate and to join the campaign team. Some had newsletters to keep track on candidates news and events. Thesis author did not find that any good election practices were violated.

For example REFORM candidate Laine Randjärv had a very simple blog that did not contained any party or election elements. On top of the page was brought out that she is the Vice Chairman of the Parliament. Laine Randjärv's blog looked very similar in structure and design part to REFORM's Aivar Sõerd candidate blog. REFORM candidate Kaja Kallas (second candidate for REFORM) did update her page layout at the beginning of April. The page went over to a new CMS platform and received a overall nicer and cleaner design. On her blog the party or election elements were also not presented. On Kaja Kallas homepage there was a clearly focus on running for the EERE2014 elections – there was a separate menu point for that on the main menu. Newsletter possibility was also present and it worked quite well – if some new post was made on the page then newsletter informed the subscriber. Overall Kaja Kallas page was simple in structure and web design part.

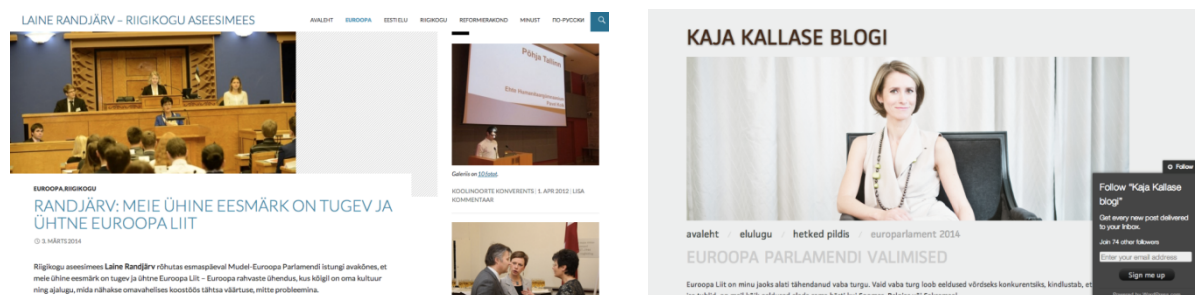


Figure 72 Kaja Kallas homepage screenshots

Independent candidate Silver Meikar had a simple blog that had a simple structure and design. It seems that Silver Meikar made the homepage himself – meaning that a professional web designer had not been used. It seems that the page was made in freeware CMS Wordpress. One interesting point is that Silver Meikar asked for donations for setting himself up for the EERE2014 election. How much money is needed and how much is collected was visible for the visitor. There was a remark that if he does not collect the needed money then he will return all the money that has been donated to him.

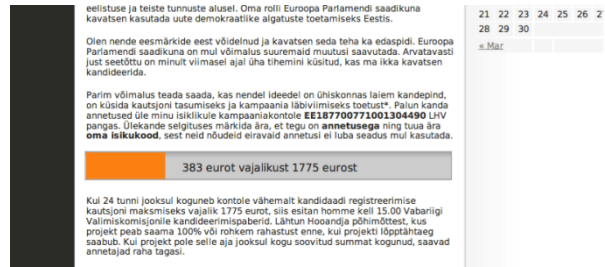


Figure 73 Silver Meikar homepage screenshots

REFORM candidate Arto Aas had a simple homepage where was presented his CV, EERE2014 information and photo gallery. The page could be viewed in Russian also. The page contained a main banner on top featuring a picture of Arto Aas and his current title – Head of Commission of the Parliament of European Union. The possibility to comment was present, with the mandatory inclusion of name and e-mail. Arto Aas was one of the few to have the party logo present on his blog page. The page did not contain any other party or election elements.



Figure 74 Arto Aas homepage screenshots

Independent candidate Tanel Talve had done special page for the EEPE2014. It seems that the page is done by professional web designer. Page topics were in focus and there was not that much not needed extra information. Page was also responsive that was convenient to use on different devices and screens. Signing up for newsletter was on the page and there was also a form where page user could leave a comment about the ideas or suggestions. Tanel Talve presented on the homepage that he will give 10% of the European Parliament salary to some Estonian group that needs support (group will be elected on competition basis). Homepage

was focused for the election and all the info was election related.

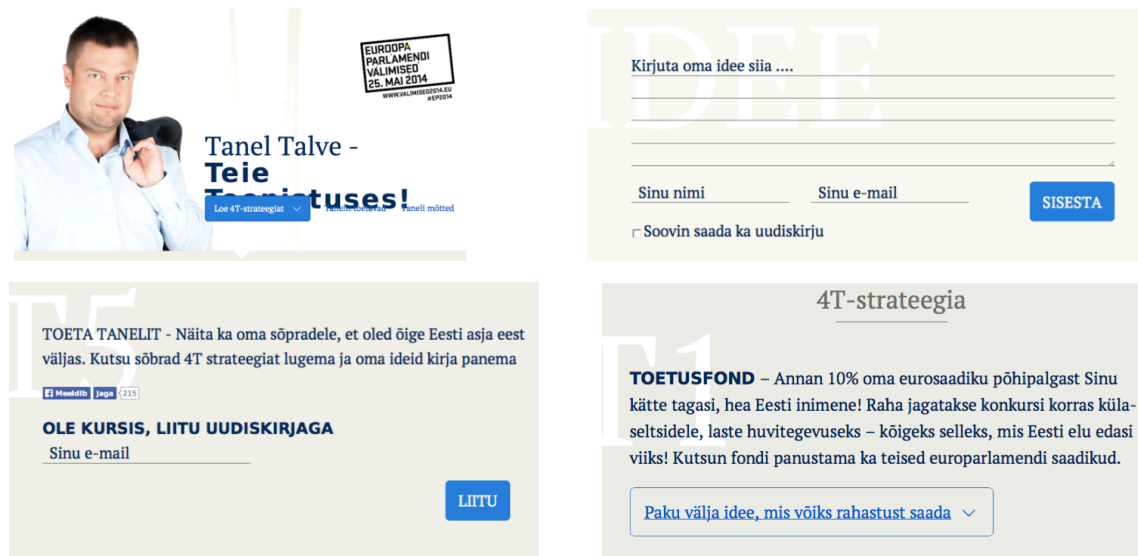


Figure 75 Tanel Tulve campaign page screenshots

IRL candidate Anvar Samost homepage had his picture and name on the top of the page. Anvar Samost states in the first page that when he will get elected, then he will give every week overview about the things in Europe on radio broadcast. For that he makes also questionnaire and asks e-mail address for getting contact with the user. On the page is place where volunteers are being looked. One interesting feature is that on the page can make directly tweet to Anvar Samost.



Figure 76 Anvar Samost campaign page screenshots

Overall homepages/blogs were simple and most of them were not created by professional web and UX designers. Pages mainly did not contained party and campaign elements. That was good that on the sites was possible to leave a comments to news or candidates opinions – it was not used very often but the possibility was there. Pages were not very responsive. 42% of the candidates did not have blogs or homepages and that is really big amount of the candidates that are not using the possibilities to inform the potential candidates and to make them want to vote. Candidates websites were not very effectively used for campaign tools – some candidates did it but there is much more potential.

4.6 Party Campaigns in Popular Social Networks (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube)

The current paragraph will give an overview about EERE2014 parties campaigning in Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. How did the channels look like and what was the way of communication to the target group. How did the popular social networks support the candidates and what kind of information was shared there.

EÜV and EIP did not have Facebook, Twitter and YouTube channels. EER and EKRE had Facebook and YouTube but did not have a Twitter account. SDME, IRL, KESK and REFORM had all the social media channels that are currently analyzed at this chapter (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube). This means that half (50%) of the parties that were participating on the EERE2014 had all the popular social media channels.

EER had a Facebook channel where there were posts both in Estonian and Russian (it was the only Facebook channel of a party with posts in two languages – it does not mean that all posts were in two languages, it means that some posts were in Estonian and some in Russian). EER had the least fans in Facebook (less than 1000 fans). EER also made the least posts to Facebook (33 in total, 64% of which were election related). The EER Facebook shows the amount of posts increasing at the end of the campaigning period. EER had a YouTube channel but it did not contain any videos at the campaigning period.

EKRE had a Facebook channel where there were below 1000 fans. There were 37 posts in total, 54% of which were election related. EKRE YouTube channel had two channels. The last video of one channel is more than a year old and the other channel had election videos. It seems that there was a new YouTube channel made for campaigning. All 6 YouTube videos were in Estonian.

SDME had a Facebook channel with almost 5000 fans. There were 36 posts in total, 44% of which were election related. SDME posted information on Facebook about their new campaign page (01.04.2014). SDME had a Twitter channel that was in Estonian (all parties' Twitter channels were in Estonian during this election). In Twitter there were 18 posts in total, where 72% were election related. SDME Twitter channel had the least posts in the election compared with other parties. SDME had a YouTube channel in Estonian and it contained 45 videos (SDME had the most videos in the campaigning – almost twice as much as the second party's number of videos ranking side).

IRL had a Facebook channel with almost 5500 fans. There were 44 posts in total, where 75% were election related. Twitter had a total of 56 posts, where 43% were election related. 75%

of the Twitter posts in total were directions to online news. IRL was the main linker to online news compared other parties that had Twitter. IRL had a YouTube channel in Estonian, English and in French (the only party that had 3 languages in YouTube). It contained 28 videos.

KESK had a Facebook channel with almost 1300 fans. There were 45 posts in total, where 60% were election related. KESK had the most posts in Facebook comparing to the other parties. KESK was the only party that made a joke on the April Fools' Day (April 1st). Twitter had total of 185 posts, where 10% were election related. 90% of the posts were political. KESK had the most posts in Twitter – more than the total Twitter posts of the other parties combined. Half of the posts were links to online news and the other half to some social media channel (including blogs). KESK Twitter shows that if there is some linking to online news, then it is done mainly to the Tallinn online news portal. There are also more links to blogs than other parties have. Twitter feeds mainly do not have any pictures or media files on the wall. KESK had a YouTube channel in Estonian and Russian. It contained 15 videos. KESK was the only party that had videos in the Russian language.

REFORM had a Facebook channel with almost 7900 fans. REFORM had the biggest Facebook fan base. There were 41 posts in total, where 78% were election related. REFORM posted mainly about Andrus Ansip on Facebook than about other candidates. From here it seems that Andrus Ansip was the main candidate for REFORM if posts that are made on Facebook are taken into account. REFORM party also thanked their voters at the end of the campaign. Twitter had 49 posts in total, where 38% were election related. REFORM posts linked mainly to their party homepage (60% of the posts). In the YouTube channel there were 6 videos.

	EÜV	SDME	EER	IRL	KESK	EKRE	REFORM	EIP
FB (Y/N)	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Language	-	EST	EST;RUS	EST	EST	EST	EST	-
Fans	-	4970	890	5418	1295	983	7851	-
Posts (nr)	-	36	33	44	45	37	41	-
Election related posts (nr)	-	16	21	33	27	20	32	-
Political posts (nr)	-	20	12	11	18	17	9	-
Twitter (Y/N)	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N
Language	-	est	-	est	est	-	est	-
Posts (nr)	-	18	-	56	185	-	49	-

Election related posts (nr)	-	13	-	24	17	-	18	-
Political posts (nr)	-	5	-	32	168	-	31	-
Link to online news (nr)	-	2	-	42	96	-	7	-
link to party page(nr)	-	5	-	2	4	-	27	-
Link to FB (nr)	-	2	-	2	-	-	1	-
Link to another social media channel (nr)	-	1	-	3	80	-	10	-
Youtube (Y/N)	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Language	-	est	est	est; eng; french	est; rus	est	est	-
Videos (nr)	-	45	0	28	15	6	7	-

Table 3 Parties social media channels overview

REFORM started to push their campaign from 01.05.14 and for example in Vimeo.com there was a video presented about the REFORM main candidate Andrus Ansip in comparison with the KESK main candidate Edgar Savisaar. Though the young SDME candidate Liina Raud brings out in her campaign video that one should choose the person not the competitor that the elector fears. The REFORM Facebook header looked good in the quality of party elements (professional picture and logos) at the monitoring period . Later their main candidate Andrus Ansip was presented in the picture and the election message “Kindlalt paremal kursil”.

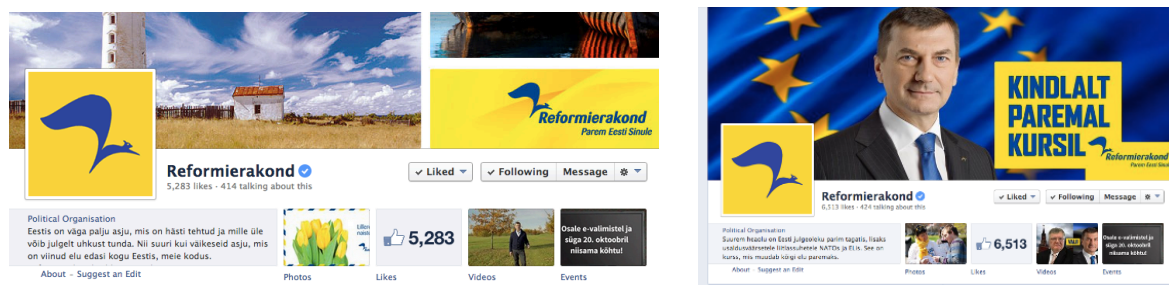


Figure 77 REFORM party Facebook screenshots

When the e-voting time came, then REFORM changed their main Facebook picture – it contained candidates pictures and a slogan “E-vali KINDLALT!”. Also there was a good solution where REFORM asked voters to tag themselves if they had e-voted.



Figure 78 REFORM party Facebook screenshots

REFORM posted on Facebook also about the REFORM main candidate Andrus Ansip and the KESK main candidate Edgar Savisaar comparisons. There were links to videos, to online newspaper news and a direction to a personal opinion about the two candidates. It seems that REFORM wanted to scare the voters that if they vote for KESK then the future is not looking bright.



Figure 79 REFORM party Facebook screenshots

REFORM posted a designed poster about candidates events over Estonia – it was nicely done. Also there were directions to other channels – for example candidate Urmas Paet was brought out, who won the National television (ETV) Election debate.



Figure 80 REFORM party Facebook screenshots

REFORM Facebook did put focus on the main candidate Andrus Ansip, who was the former Estonian prime minister. There were presented different videos, pictures, stories about him, also links to online news etc. In different campaigning materials, there is brought up several times, that Andrus Ansip was the former prime minister and he did a very good job in that time. There is a campaign poster where there is noted, that the Finnish prime minister praises Andrus Ansip as a good prime minister. REFORM youth party supported the main candidate Arto Aas – for example they had a professional Facebook header with a picture of Arto Aas. REFORM videos and other materials were done by professionals. In the election messages there is mentioned security, well being, open market – about all the points REFORM stands for.

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PÕHAPÄEV 25. MAI
EUROPARLAMENDI VALIMISED



HEAOLU JA JULGEOLEK

Reformierakond
Meie pikaajasele peaministrile, mehele, kes viib Eesti sõnumi Euroopas päriselt kohale, saab nendel valimistel oma hääle anda üle terve Eesti. Vali Ansip. Andrus Ansip. Kindlalt.
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Embed Post

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👍 37 people like this.

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Reformierakond
Yesterday at 09:44 · 🌐

Meie pikaajasele peaministrile, mehele, kes viib Eesti sõnumi Euroopas päriselt kohale, saab nendel valimistel oma hääle anda üle terve Eesti. Vali Ansip. Andrus Ansip. Kindlalt.
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PÕHAPÄEV 25. MAI
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Figure 81 REFORM party Facebook screenshots

REFORM reminds the electors to go voting and e-voting. There are special videos done for that. Posts direct to the voting info page www.valimised.ee. For example one video is done with the second candidate of REFORM, Kaja Kallas, and one Estonian opera singer, where the elector is playfully informed to go voting.



Figure 82 REFORM party Facebook screenshots

It is important to mention that the REFORM Facebook copywriting side looked professional and thought through. It seems that the text was created by a professional copywriter.

The REFORM Twitter page info is quite good overall, it informs of what is going on and gives some important links. It is a little bit unclear, that is the page focused mainly on the info form to elections or on the overall party message. The party logo is presented. In Twitter there was also Andrus Ansip, the main candidate, presented. For example, it is brought out that Andrus Ansip's new book is out.



Figure 83 REFORM party Twitter screenshots

In Twitter there is also a comparison with Andrus Ansip and the KESK main candidate Edgar Savisaar. It seems that the other party members also support the elections. In the tweets there are the election main messages, platform link and other election related directions brought up.



Figure 84 REFORM party Twitter screenshots

There are Twitter links to vimeo.com campaign video, where Andrus Ansip and Edgar Savisaar are presented.



Figure 85 REFORM party Twitter Andrus Ansip and Edgar Savisaar comparison post screenshot

At the beginning of the monitoring period KESK had a very simple Facebook main picture, where there is the parliament and party mascot rhinoceros. If it got closer to the election time, then KESK changed the main picture and also presented their logo. At some point there were also presented the candidates of the elections. It seems that like on REFORM Facebook,

KESK changed their Facebook looks depending on the current time. REFORM though, looked more thought through and the pictures and elements were done in a more professional manner.

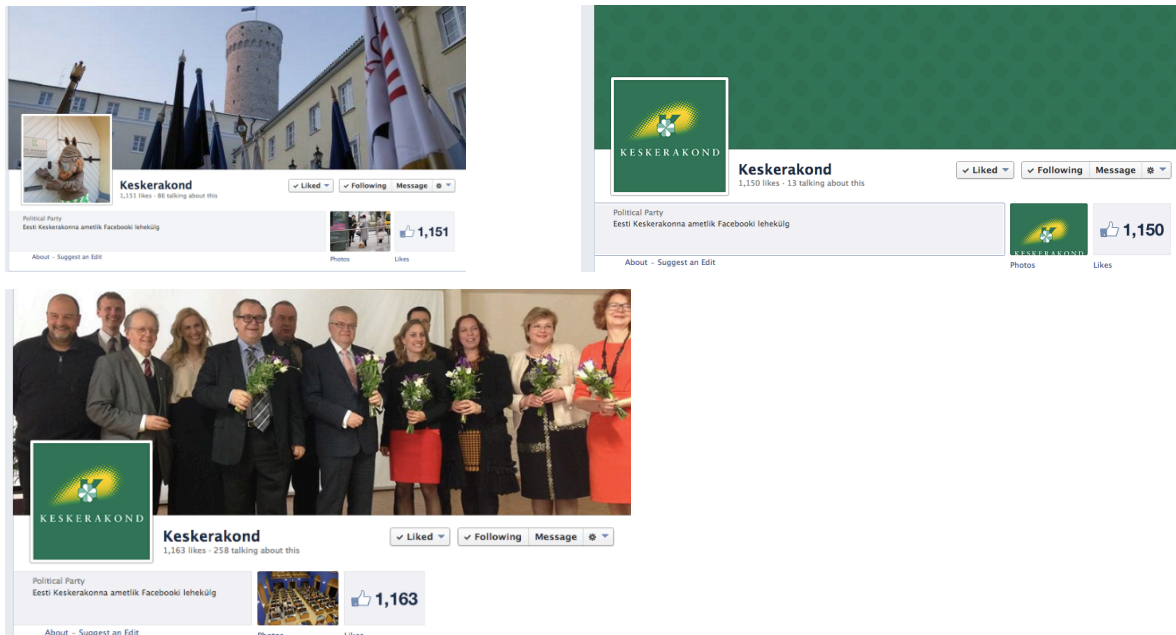


Figure 86 KESK party Facebook screenshots

KESK informed Facebook fans about their new homepage and that is usable also in all of the smart devices and in different screen sizes. They asked a question about how do the users like it – KESK wanted to create a dialog with users and this is a good usage of social media, making the interaction both ways, not just spreading the information. Also there were links to other pages – for example there was a debate with KESK and REFORM candidate going on, and in a Facebook post there was a link to a news channel video.

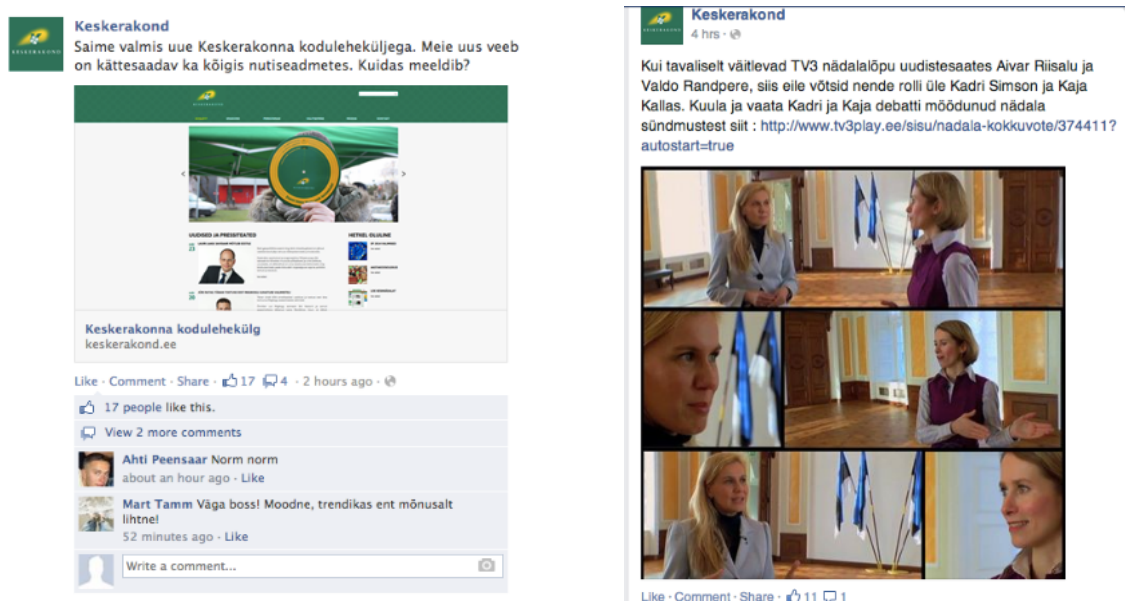


Figure 87 KESK party Facebook posts screenshots

KESK also brought out message “RAHU!” in the posts of their campaign, and also presented other media campaign advertising – for example, an outdoor poster. KESK also brought out the candidate priority list with candidates names, numbers and pictures.



Figure 88 KESK party Facebook posts screenshots

KESK stated in their Facebook post that they focus on the positive EERE2014 campaigning, not like some others that are negative and attacking candidates personally. KESK will focus on their candidates and on the positive platform program. KESK presented different videos with different messages of what they will do if they get elected. Facebook was linked to the videos. Videos were professional and the message was clear and focused on change, not criticizing others. This is a new approach because in previous elections there have been both the critical notes to party and candidates directions. KESK lets Facebook users know that they have a EERE2014 bus that will have meetings all over Estonia.

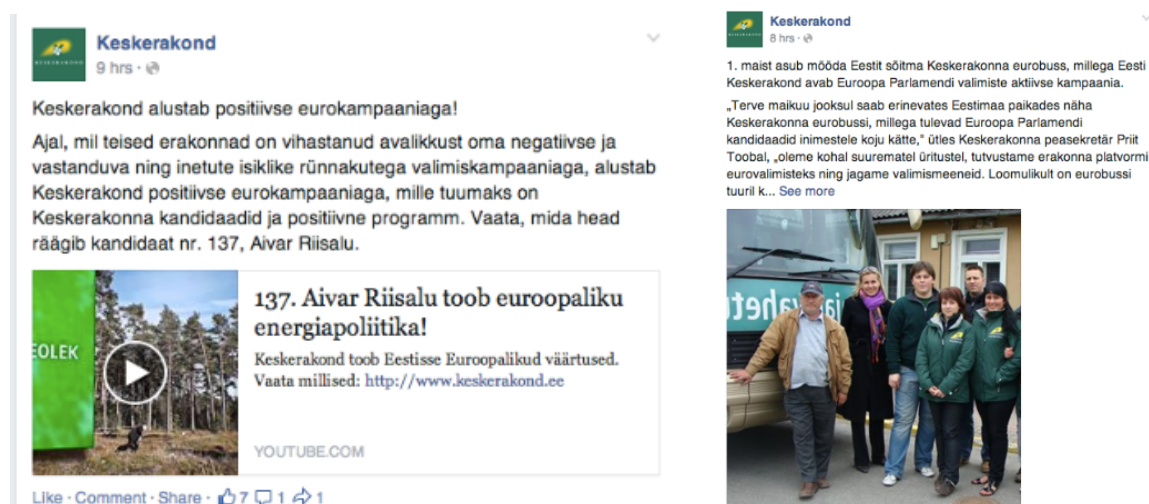




Figure 89 KESK party Facebook posts screenshots

KESK Twitter had the most posts in Twitter of eight parties that participated in the EERE2014 but it seemed that the channel was not used that much for EERE2014 campaigning because the main amount of the posts were related to overall politics. It is good to be in the picture and all of the information that is spread helps the campaigning but there was not a clear focus on EERE2014 in Twitter. KESK presented the person's name that tweeted to KESK Twitter (there are two examples in below). There were some messages that were not so clear what is meant before clicking on the link. One example is (on the picture on the right side below) where it is mentioned, that some candidates will set up the candidature for the European parliament and that the weather reflects that it is the time. Who sets up the candidature and what is the message goal remains unclear if the Twitter users look at the tweet and don't click on the link.



Figure 90 KESK part Twitter posts screenshots

IRL had a simple main Facebook picture at the beginning of the monitoring period, where there is an IRL logo and national colors and patterns. When the campaign evolved, IRL changed the main picture several times. At one point there were candidates pictures, names and their professions presented. There was also KESK main candidate Edgar Savisaar presented, kissing Putin and a slogan that said “No to corruption”.

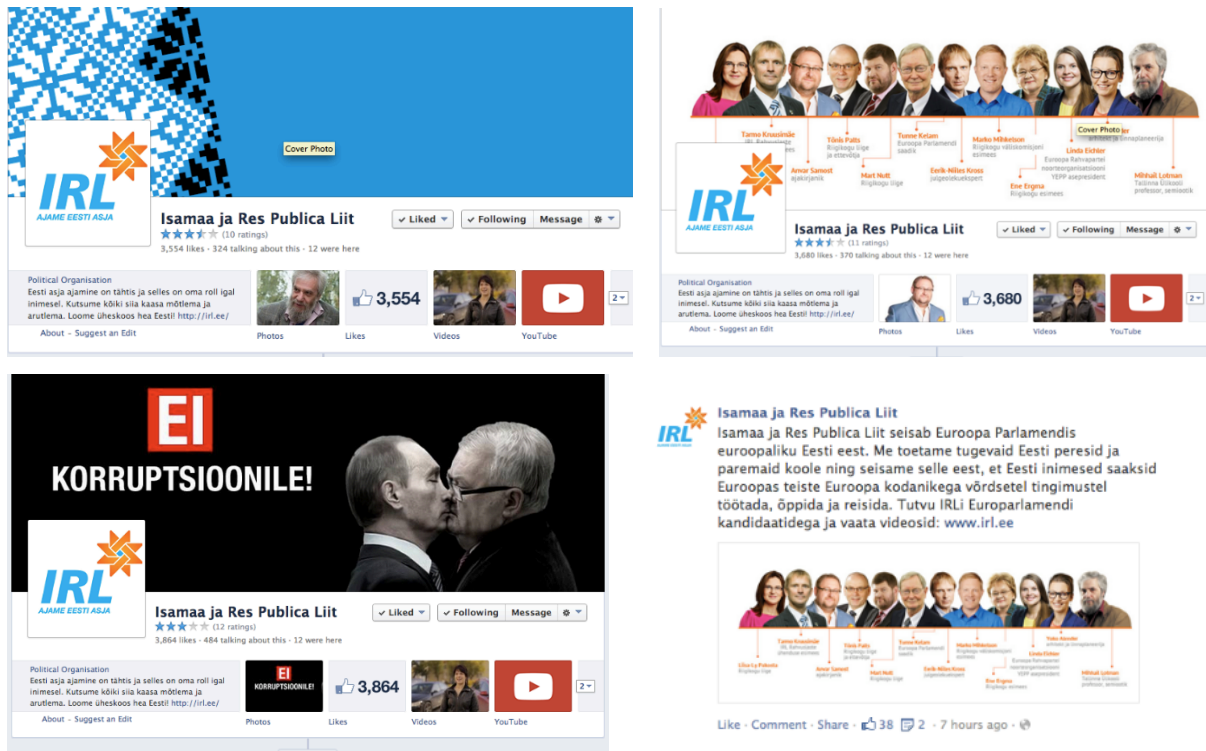


Figure 91 IRL party Facebook screenshots

One interesting solution that IRL brought out on Facebook platform was the e-salk (in translation: e-squad). The application asks to join and help EERE2014 candidates in IRL digital team. What can be done there and what is the overall goal remains a question. The author of the thesis wanted to join the e-squad but when there were permission notifications showed, then the joining was not made. It stated there that IRL e-salk will receive the following information: “your public profile, friend list, email address, custom friend lists, news feed, birthday, chat status, groups, hometown, interests, photos, religious and political views etc.”. It seems that this could scare the potential candidates to join because IRL wants to know their personal info and it is not understood how will IRL use the info and with whom is the info shared.

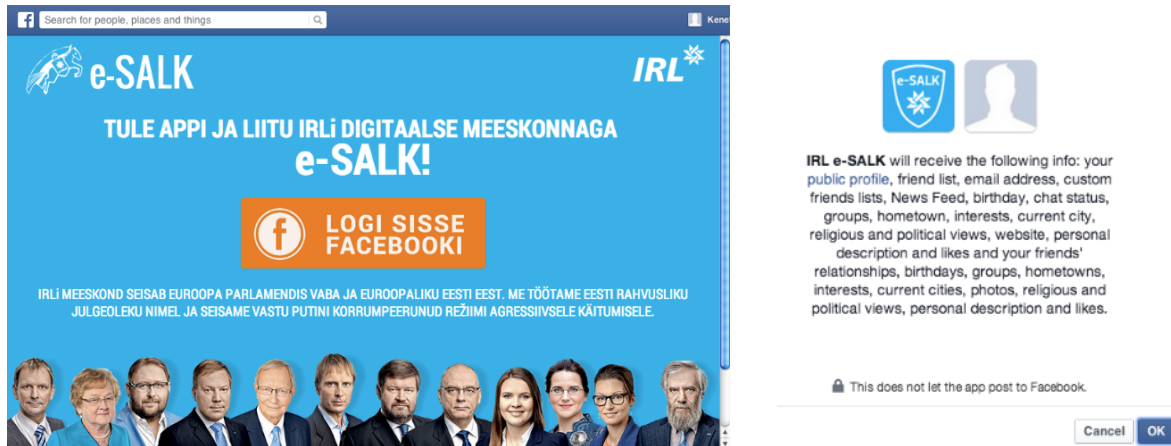


Figure 92 IRL part Facebook "e-SALK" screenshots

IRL shared political posts with directions to different newspapers on Facebook. It seems that IRL candidates were quite active in different meetings, protests and other politics-related events where there were the IRL candidates views stated. IRL also presented their candidates priority list with links to newspaper about their first candidate info (there was no direction to IRL homepage on that post).

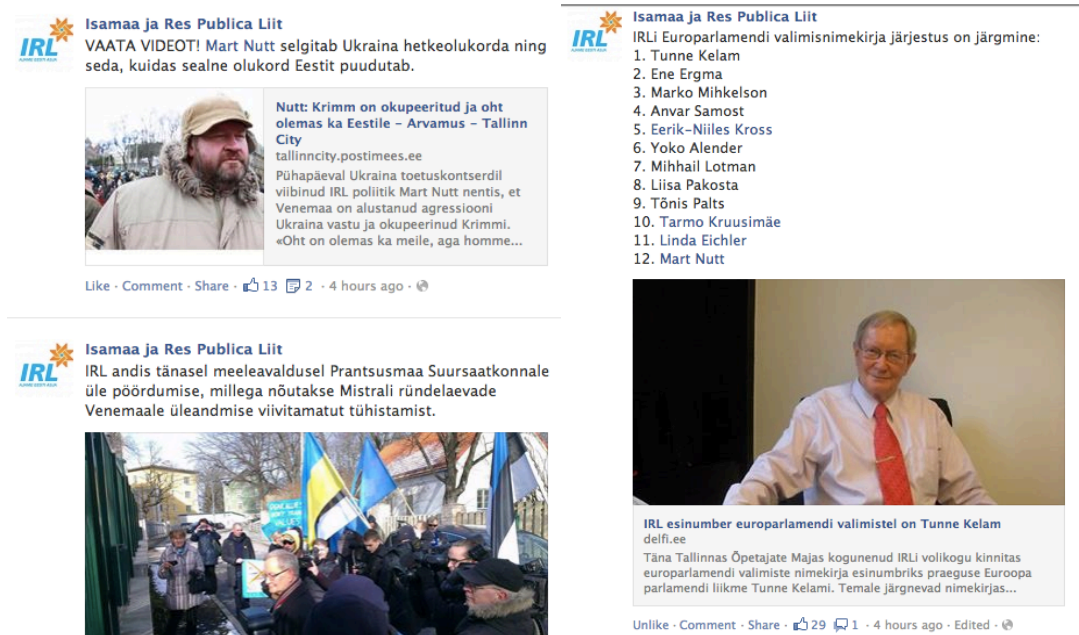


Figure 93 IRL party Facebook posts screenshots

IRL shared their candidates' Facebook posts. It is a good approach because the content is already created and if it is a good content then it is absolutely worth spreading in different channels. The official office of the IRL main candidate Tunne Kelam created many posts that were shared by IRL Facebook page.



Figure 94 IRL party Facebook posts screenshots

Anvar Samost political Facebook account posts were also shared and at some point IRL informed that the new political Facebook account is available and potential voters should Like the page to hear about the bus tour and get the pictures of events.



Figure 95 Anvar Samost Facebook posts screenshots

IRL presented posts that were critical towards REFORM – these were on political issues, not election related, though it was done on the monitoring period that could give the potential voters some input to change the voting decision.

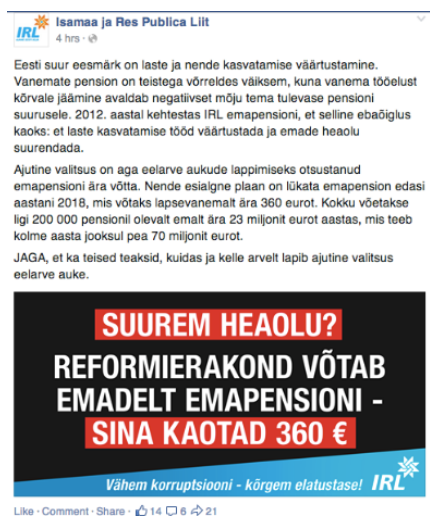


Figure 96 IRL party Facebook posts screenshots

IRL linked to online TV channel where one could view the candidate debate. IRL also supported e-voting and in one post there was a poster with a link to www.valimised.ee (e-voting environment link) to e-vote for IRL and there was a call to action - to like the post if the viewer liked the e-voting post.



Figure 97 IRL party Facebook screenshots

IRL youth party was also quite active for supporting the elections and their young candidate Linda Eichler. For example, there was a simple poster about Linda Eichler with a question and a direction to vote for her number (name was not presented but the picture was on the poster). Also there was a comparison between Linda Eichler and SDME young candidate Liina Raud where the last person's negative impact to politics was brought out – the candidate was not attacked on personal basis. Some posts and visual components were quite professional.



Figure 98 IRL youth party Facebook screenshots

The Facebook account of IRL youth party announced with posters about how many days there were left for voting. The IRL Facebook post also informed that the final day of the voting is coming and that there is still possible to change the vote (it seems that the current post that is given for example, calls potential voters to vote on the main election day, not to e-vote).



Figure 99 IRL youth party Facebook screenshots

There were also Facebook ads bought out by IRL. It was not clear if the IRL candidate Linda Eichler bought the Facebook ad by herself or did the party pay – though the ad directed the potential voter to the Linda Eichler political Facebook page. From Ene Ergma side it was clear that the party paid for the ad because there were made directions to IRL page and there were IRL elements used (logos and overall IRL election messages). Ads contained candidate pictures, numbers, names or IRL logo and message.



Figure 100 Facebook ad's screenshots

IRL Twitter main page contained IRL logo and national colors at the beginning of the monitoring period. Later on, there was IRL main candidate Tunne Kelam photo brought out and a message that Tunne Kelam started the movement “No to Putins corruption”. The last design was simple and it seems that it is not designed so professionally.



Figure 101 IRL party Twitter screenshots

Like on the IRL Facebook, Twitter also used the information in the tweets where there were KESK main candidate Edgar Savisaar or REFORM political approach criticized.



Figure 102 IRL party Facebook and Twitter screenshots

IRL announces in Twitter that EERE2014 elections are going on and there is direction to watch candidates’ video introductions. Also IRL Twitter promotes e-voting and has a link to valimised.ee to do that.



Figure 103 IRL party Twitter posts screenshots

IRL YouTube channel had two interesting sets of videos. Two EERE2014 candidates Yoko Alender and Linda Eichler had videos where they stated that more women are needed to politics. Also the Finnish prime minister Jyrki Katainen had a video where he promotes the IRL young candidate Linda Eichler. Eichler and Yoko videos got some attention in the online media but it could have been spread better to potential voters through different digital

channels. Also the Finnish prime minister’s video is good content but it seems that it did not reach the potential voters.

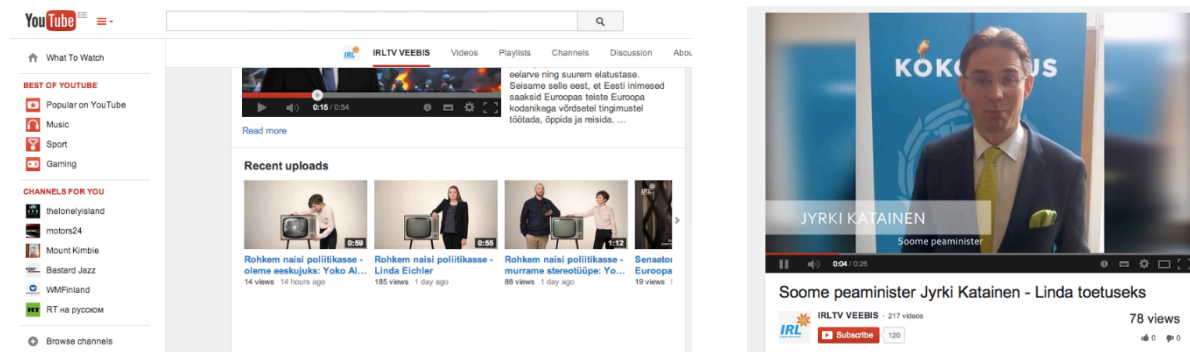


Figure 104 IRL party YouTube channel screenshots

SDME had, at the beginning of the monitoring period, a simple main Facebook picture where there is the SDME logo, red and white color and the party slogan “Mina hoolin!” that is in translation: “I care!”. When the campaign evolved, then SDME changed the main pictures several times. At one point there were candidates’ pictures presented and the election campaign message “Tugev Eesti” and “Tugev meeskond” that means in translation: “Strong Estonia” and “Strong Teams”. It seems that Facebook headers are done by a professional designer and the design looks through and feels also professional like it should be in politics. The design is without noise and has the focus is in place.



Figure 105 SDME party Facebook screenshots

SDME posted info about their newspaper that contained information about the EERE2014 elections and the candidates. The SDME youth party Facebook page shared the young candidate Liina Raud’s political Facebook page and did promotion to the fan page to keep on track with Liina Raud’s latest news and doings.



Figure 106 SDME Facebook posts screenshots

SDME informed the public on Facebook about their new EERE2014 campaign page and about how many days there was for parliament elections. It seems also that the Facebook content is created by people that know what they are doing.



Figure 107 SDME party Facebook screenshots

There are links found to other online media publications about the candidates and EERE2014 materials.. The youth party also shares the event that was created for campaigning – it is a music party where the young candidate Liina Raud is playing music. Parties were held in different nightclubs and cafes around Estonia.



Figure 108 SDME party Facebook screenshots

The SDME Twitter main page contained the SDME logo and the party’s main messages. On the Twitter info account there is too little information – it only has a direction to homepage.



Figure 109 SDME party Twitter screenshots

SDME tweeted about events and re-tweeted newspapers stories and some people’s opinions about politics.



Figure 110 SDME party Twitter posts screenshots

It seems from tweets that Marju Lauristin is the SDME main candidate and the party’s Twitter account supported her in a good way. If Marju Lauristin’s Facebook fan page was launched

then SDME Twitter informed the Twitter users. They also shared the EERE2014 candidates priority list and videos about the candidates – mainly about Marju Lauristin.



Figure 111 SDME party Twitter posts screenshots

SDME had a YouTube channel where there were professional videos about the candidates. They were mainly about the SDME main candidate Marju Lauristin. The SDME youth party also had a YouTube channel and it is important to mention that there was an emotional video of the young EERE2014 candidate Liina Raud’s husband Mihkel Raud (who is a musician, a songwriter and a TV host) that supported the campaigning. The video had the most views in EERE2014 campaigning from all the parties and it seemed that there was a playful content made and because of the person and the content it reached to the potential electors. The video was about that if you do not care about the EERE2014 then do not vote at all.

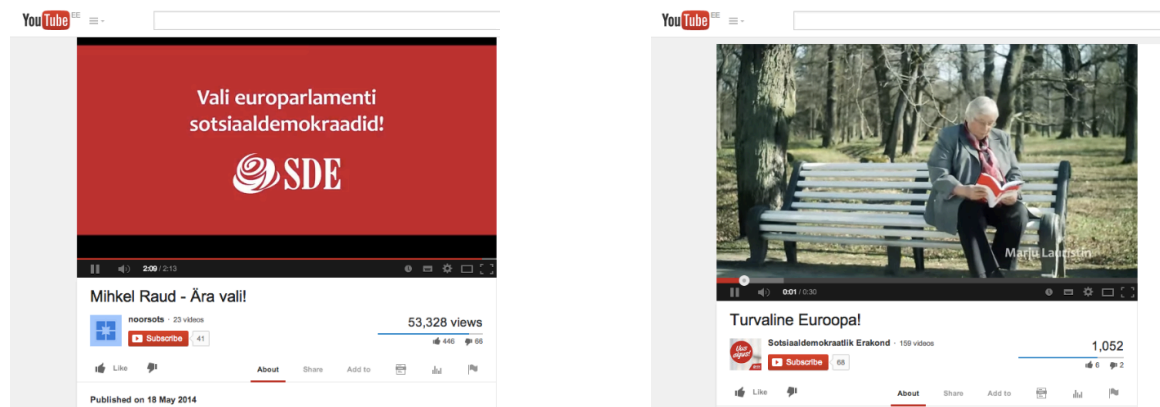


Figure 112 SDME party YouTube channel screenshots

EKRE changed their Facebook header pictures several times. At one point they had an EKRE logo and a statement about the border agreement that Setumaa is part of Estonia and Jaanilinn is an Estonian city – a picture and an execution of the header was quite professional. Another Facebook header contained three candidates of parties - KESK main candidate Edgar Savisaar with a Russian flag at the background, REFORM main candidate Andrus Ansip with an EU flag at the background and EKRE’s Martin Helme with an Estonian flag at the background. The header execution does not seem that professional from a design perspective. The header feels a bit critical towards Edgar Savisaar but towards to Andrus Ansip it seems like a free advertisement because there is also a picture of Andrus Ansip with an EU flag behind him on the REFORM homepage.



Figure 113 EKRE party Facebook screenshots

EKRE informed the public on Facebook about starting their overall EERE2014 campaigning and made a direction to an online newspaper to read about it. EKRE also informed about agreeing about the candidates and again made direction to an online newspaper about it.



Figure 114 EKRE party Facebook posts screenshots

The post shared by EKRE was quite straightforward and in an ordering tone of voice that if the potential elector does not want to be the one who pays to the corrupt politicians and greedy bankers to damage the economy then they should vote from EKRE. The poster is not done from professional design partner. It seems more likely to be done in Microsoft Word. Like other parties, EKRE also directs to election news portal (for example poliitika.postimees.ee) that was specially created for the campaigning time.



Figure 115 EKRE party Facebook posts screenshots

It is a good approach that EKRE brings out what the candidates priorities are for the party (for example fifth candidate Jaak Madison) in the posts. The texts of the posts have a structure and are quite good. The photos and design does not feel professional and it seems that the party members themselves have made the design and photos.



Figure 116 EKRE party Facebook screenshots

EER had a Facebook account and also shared election related posts. For example, the Facebook header picture was changed to a picture of dandelions at the end of the voting period. There were directions to the political online news portal (poliitika.postimees.ee) where EER candidate answers to questions were presented.



Figure 117 EER party Facebook posts screenshots

There were also the name and number of the candidate that made a post on EER Facebook account. It seems that there is no professional copywriter or designer used for the Facebook account. The election related posts were mostly made during the last month of the monitoring period (May 2014). There were very few likes and shares to the posts from fans. It seems like the EERE2014 is not a top priority or there was a missing knowhow about how to communicate on the social media.



Figure 118 EER party Facebook posts screenshots

Overall, from eight parties there were 2 parties (25% of the parties) that had no Facebook, Twitter or YouTube; there were 2 parties (25% of the parties) that did not have Twitter and 4 parties (50% of the parties) that had three social media channels. Parties that had all three social media channels were also the biggest parties in Estonia and had the most members (the top 4) – SDME, REFORM, KESK and IRL.

Facebook and Twitter communications were rather good. Parties informed about the candidates, platforms and different events and stories related to elections. Linkages were done to online news, homepages and candidate campaign pages but it should have been done more, because if good content is created, it is wise to share it, if it is connected with the overall campaign strategy. The designs and messages were changed depending on time. There were also many political posts because there was a war going on in Ukraine and the Estonian government also changed (REFORM had new young prime minister). Even if the posts are not related to the election campaign it could affect the final results. Some parties were critical towards others and attacked other parties and certain candidates quite personally, which is not a very good election practice. REFORM, IRL and EKRE were attacking KESK party and mainly their main candidate Edgar Savisaar. KESK said on their social media channels that they will not attack others and will focus on the positive EERE2014 campaigning that will focus on candidates and the platform. IRL was also critical towards REFORM but it was not related to EERE2014 – it was about the current political situation. In social media channels there were no initiated debates with potential electors. One good example is though, KESK who asked opinions and pushed the potential voters to give feedback or opinions on some certain topics. The designs of social media channels were quite moderate. REFORM and

SMDE stood more out and showed that designs are thought through and there was a focus set. IRL had an interesting Facebook solution e-salk where they wanted the potential voters to join their Digital team to help the candidates and receive better political power to gain success. Though with tough permission rights the author of the thesis did not join the e-salk and it could have also been a reason for some other potential electors because there was no explanation of what is done with the personal data that would be given to IRL. Main candidates got attention on social media channels by the parties – videos, posts, posters etc. From REFORM, IRL and SMDE side it was very clear who was the main candidate. There seemed to be little cross channel social media usage that should have been done more. Some youth party social media channels also supported the elections and candidates – for example SDME, IRL and REFORM.

They had professional designs and IRL and REFORM stood out from others even more. Messages were also with decent quality. One video on the SDME youth party’s YouTube channel stood out more than others because the video had more views than any other YouTube video among election videos – it supported the young candidate Liina Raud. From the party’s social media perspective the overall quality was good, but it seems that a certain strategy was missing and it could have been done in a more structured way to reach the electors.

4.7 Candidates Campaigns on Popular Social Networks (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube)

The current paragraph will give an overview about EERE2014 88 candidates campaigns on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, what was the way of communication to the target group and how did the channels look like. How did the popular social networks support the candidates and what kind of information was shared.

From 88 candidates there were 72 personal Facebook (82% of the candidates) - and 28 political Facebook (32% of the candidates) accounts, 25 YouTube channels (28% of the candidates) and 42 Twitter accounts (48% of the candidates). The possibility of following the personal Facebook was introduced to 27 candidates (31% of the candidates).

	EÜV	SDME	EER	IRL	KESK	EKRE	REFORM	EIP	INDEPENDENT	Total Candidates
Total Candidates	1	12	4	12	12	12	12	7	16	88

Personal FB	1	10	4	9	9	10	10	4	15	72
Following	1	2	1	6	4	3	3	3	4	27
Political FB	-	5	-	11	3	1	1	1	6	28
YouTube	-	3	1	4	3	2	1	1	10	25
Twitter	-	7	3	8	4	3	6	1	10	42

Table 4 Candidates campaigns overview in popular social networks by party selection.

A Personal Facebook account is owned by most of the candidates, but there is not that much focus put on the campaigning. The average number of posts is 46, number of election related posts is 6, number of political information is 6 and number of the candidate's personal information is 42. It shows that the main focus is on the candidates' personal information that is shared through the channel. For example, the top info sharing candidates were IRL's Liisa Pakosta, Tarmo Kruusimägi, EKRE's Mart Helme and REFORM's Urmas Paet – all of them had over 400 posts in the monitoring period. Urmas Paet had the most posts – 505. Urmas Paet had a birthday and this scaled the private posts in the wall quite high – some other candidates also had birthdays during the monitoring period and at some times it included quite significant amount of private posts on the Facebook wall. REFORM candidate Kaja Kallas had the most election related posts, with 35 posts, and the independent candidate Joeri Wiersma with 30 posts. The personal Facebook fan limit is 5000 and the ones that had near 5000 fans were Liisa Pakosta from IRL, Edgar Savisaar from KESK, Juku-Kalle Raid from EIP, Emil Rutiku from EIP, independent candidates Kristiina Ojuland and Tanel Talve. Liisa Pakosta, Juku-Kalle Raid and Kristiina Ojuland also had a political Facebook account where there were over 1000 fans. Personal Facebook accounts were mainly only in Estonian (56 candidates had posts only in Estonian – 64% from all of the FB account candidates) and others were in some other language or multilingual. For example KESK Yana Toom and independent candidate Dmitri Silber had posts only in Russian. SDME Natalja Kitam and EER candidate Darja Vorontsova had posts in English and Russian. The following possibility had 31% from all of the candidates and 38% from the candidates that had a personal Facebook. Because Facebook has a 5000 friend limit, it is a good way to inform the interested potential candidates by the following function that has no limit. Candidate can activate the following possibility easily if it is wanted. It seems that many candidates do not know about the possibility and it also seems that some of the candidates do not want that the personal account will be found at all. For example SDME main candidate Marju Lauristin's personal Facebook account is restricted for viewers. IRL candidate Erik-Niiles Kross's personal

Facebook account is hard to find because the person's full name is not presented. KESK candidate Yana Toom and REFROM candidate Kaja Kallas had the possibility of following the personal account on Facebook. Many candidates thanked the electors after voting day – SDME Ivari Padar, Marianne Mikko (she even had a professional Facebook header designed with party colors, where the “thank you” note is presented), EER Marko Kaasik, IRL Anvar Samost and Yoko Alender, EKRE Martin Helme, REFORM Kaja Kallas, KESK Jana Toom etc. Independent candidate Jevgeni Krištavoviš's private account is open to follow and it is quite open-minded. He is the only candidate who has a video blog that gives a personal touch to his messages. Jevgeni Krištavoviš also thanked the voters. REFROM main candidate Andrus Ansip did not have a Facebook personal or political account.

Political Facebook accounts are owned by 32% (27 candidates) of the total candidates. It seems that political Facebook account is not used that much for campaigning and from the overall view the political Facebook accounts also are not made that much for campaigning. One positive example from a party perspective is that 92% IRL candidates have political Facebook accounts. If the candidate wants to have one account only for friends then the political Facebook account is the right thing to use for the communication for potential voters. For example IRL main candidate Tunne Kelam, SDME main candidate Marju Lauristin and independent candidate Indrek Tarand had Facebook political accounts, though Tunne Kelam did not have a private Facebook account. Also there were two more candidates (SDME Urve Palo and IRL Mart Nutt) that had political Facebook account but the author of the thesis did not find the personal Facebook accounts. Overall there were 25 candidates (28% from all candidates) that had both Facebook accounts. The political Facebook candidate accounts were mainly in Estonian (23 accounts from 27). Lance Gareth Edward Boxall was the only candidate that had all the posts in English. IRL candidate Erik-Niiles Kross had the most fans in political Facebook – more than 15 500 fans, followed by SDME young candidate Liina Raud with more than 5300 fans, SDME Urve Palo with more than 4000 fans etc. The overall fan bases for political accounts were not that big. Lance Gareth Edward Boxall had the most posts with 100 posts in total (51 of which were political, 32 election related and 17 private). An interesting point is that Lance Gareth Edward Boxall's political Facebook account was created on May 1st, 2014. The independent candidate Silver Meikar had the most election related posts, with 45 posts (he had 56 posts in total, 10 of which were political and 1 private). The average numbers of candidates' posts were: 40 total posts, 20 election related, 17 political and 4 private. The average of 22 posts of total were linkages to some other social media

channels or blogs. Here it shows that with political Facebook accounts, more focus is put on the election related and political posts than private. With personal Facebook accounts there was a different story. IRL candidates Tunne Kelam and Yoko Alender and also SDME candidate Marju Lauristin had good descriptions about themselves on political Facebook accounts. Tunne Kelam had information about his current position, membership of the party and contact details. Yoko Alender had information about current position, her views, party views, relationship status and contacts including e-mail and homepage address. Marju Lauristin had information about current status, number of votes at Parliament elections, history of achievements, experiences, hometown and website address.

Twitter accounts are owned by 48% (42 candidates) of the total candidates. IRL also shows a good channel usage here with 8 candidates using Twitter (67% of IRL election candidates). Though overall there were 17 candidates' accounts that were not active or there was no information. It means that 25 candidates had active accounts (28% of all the candidates). Most of inactive accounts had SDME (from 7 accounts 4 were inactive). Posts were mainly multilingual and only one account was in Estonian. There were average 123 posts where 18 were election related, 101 political and 19 private. On the average, linkage to online news were from 32 of the posts, 27 to Facebook and 35 to other social media channels or blogs. The top tweeter was Marko Mihkelson with 762 posts, 17 of which were election related, 733 political and 12 private. 172 tweets linked to online news, 8 to Facebook and 268 to other social media channels or blogs. Most election related tweets had the IRL candidate Yoko Alender with 81 tweet. Yoko Alender also linked the tweets quite a lot to Facebook with the second top result of 101 tweets to Facebook (total tweets in Twitter were 224).

It seems that Twitter is used for spreading the political ideas and information. Twitter account activity is a lot higher than on Facebook.

YouTube accounts are owned by 28% (25 candidates) of total candidates. Though 5 accounts were not active, where there was no videos during the monitoring period. IRL candidate Linda Eichler, EIP candidate Emil Rutiku, Independent candidates Olga Sõtnik and Svetlana Ivanitskaja and EKRE candidate Henn Põlluas did not have any videos. Taking this into account, then there were 20 active YouTube channels making it 23% from all candidates. Independent candidates had the most YouTube channel accounts (10 accounts out of 16 candidates). Parties' candidates did not use that much personal YouTube channels. SDME candidate Marianne Mikko had the most videos, with 20 videos and the independent

candidate Silver Meikar with 18 videos. The average video count for YouTube channel owner was 5 videos. Most of the channels (more than half) were in Estonian and others were multilingual. Independent candidate Indrek Tarand and KESK Yana Toom also had YouTube channels.

For example, the private Facebook account of IRL Toomas Alatalu did not have any campaign related design and the overall looks were quite gray. Toomas Alatalu wanted to be in the candidate list and was criticized a little bit for his party’s actions. Toomas Alatalu also did not have the following possibility. Independent candidate Jevgeni Krishtafovitch changed his private Facebook header pictures quite often. They were not so professional. Profile picture gives a good view of how the candidate looks. Also the account had this possibility and the messages were quite open-minded and related to politics.



Figure 119 Candidates Facebook headers screenshots

KESK main candidate Edgar Savisaar and Yana Toom had the following possibility and profile pictures were their own photos. In the header pictures they were presented in some event or with their family. Yana Toom had all the posts in Russian language. It seems from the design elements that not that much attention has been put into election but from the perspective of posts there are some messages about the campaigning.

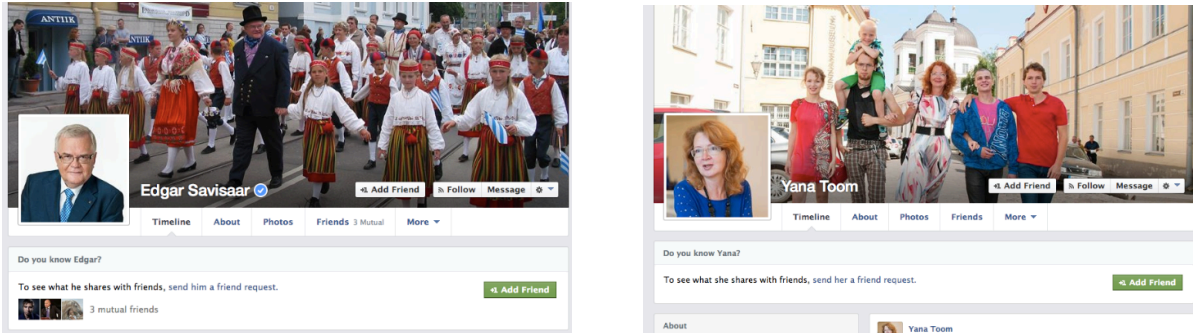


Figure 120 Candidates Facebook headers screenshots

IRL candidates Mart Nutt and Liisa Pakosta had profile pictures of themselves in the profile pictures of their political Facebook and in the header picture there were also photos of them and their election numbers presented. Mart Nutt’s political Facebook header also had the party colors and the main message of the party. Liisa Pakosta’s political Facebook header had no party elements but it had directions to Twitter and homepage, which is a good point for the cross usage of channels.



Figure 121 Candidates Facebook headers screenshots

SDME main candidate Marju Lauristin and EKRE young Candidate Jaak Madison had political accounts where the profile pictures were photos of themselves as on the main header. Marju Lauristin’s header looks like the party has provided the design for it because it contains Marju Lauristin’s picture, call to action for electing her to European Parliament, election number and a focused professional design, though Jaak Madison also has a call to action for electing him to European parliament, election number, party logo and a picture of Jaak Madisson. Jaak Madisson’s design is not very professional and it seems that it is done with a minimum cost or even by the party member himself.

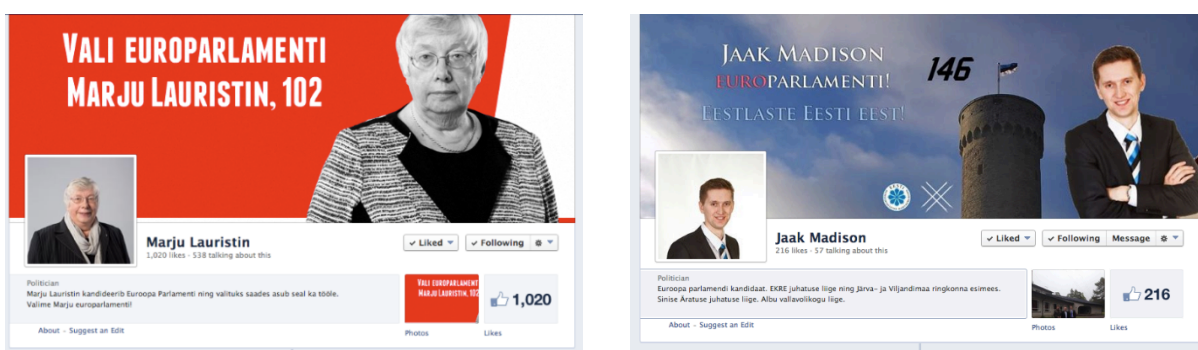


Figure 122 Candidates Facebook headers screenshots

Independent candidate Krista Mulenok had her photo as a profile picture and a Facebook header with her election number and a campaign message. The header has not been done by a professional designer but it is simple, focused and the election number is in a big focus.

The political Facebook account of Eerik-Niiles Kross has the most fans during the election. His profile picture is his election number and the header is a picture of him, his signature and a call to action for electing him to the European parliament. It is a quite good approach to use the election number in the profile picture because when he posts to Facebook wall, then the number is always visible to the readers of the posts.



Figure 123 Candidates Facebook headers screenshots

The personal Facebook accounts of independent candidate Indrek Tarand and SMDE candidate Marianne Mikko had profile pictures with their photos and the headers were related to election campaigning. Indrek Tarand had a picture about his poster exhibition about actions in the European Parliament in 2009 – 2014. During these years Indrek Tarand was in the European Parliament and once again wanted to get elected. Indrek Tarand’s profile picture is his photo with sunglasses – he was on TV previously, showing the glasses and it is like a branding element. Though, in the elections, Indrek Tarand did not present him that much with sunglasses and was putting more focus on his yellow sweater. Maybe it is a good idea to present a picture of himself with the yellow sweater also to use the branding in different channels equally. Marianne Mikko had a professional profile picture and header design. Header design was related to the party colors and it seems that the party provided the designs. For example, after the elections Marianne Mikko had a header where there was a “Thank you” note designed for the voters. All of the appearance looked professional for the framework design. The posts were not that professional and it seems that Marianne Mikko made the post by herself – pictures, videos and posts content. Though it was made by herself, there could have been some guidance from the party’s communication department.



Figure 124 Candidates Facebook headers screenshots

The political Facebook accounts of IRL candidate Yoko Alender and KESK candidate Kadri Simson had photos of themselves as profile pictures and their photos were also presented in the headers. In the header, Yoko Alender had a message about what she stands for, her name and candidate number – the design is not professional and there is no party or campaigning design elements used. Kadri Simson’s profile picture is a professional election photo with the election number. The header has her picture, the European flag and messages about who she is – for example, sister, politician, daughter etc. Header picture is professional but the whole header design does not look like it is done by professionals.



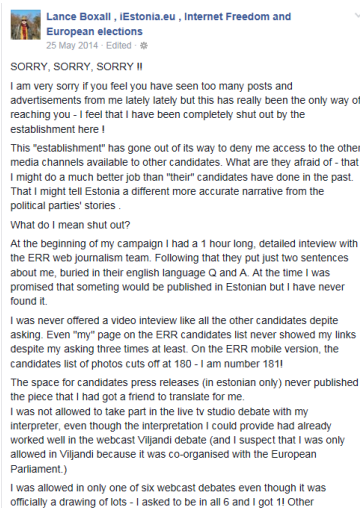
Figure 125 Candidates Facebook headers screenshots

The political account of the IRL main candidate Tunne Kelam had a candidate photo for a profile picture, that was not that professional and in the headers there were pictures about the current situation presented. Profile pictures and headers were changed from time to time. The header pictures should have been more meaningful because, for example, the picture of mistral having a red cross or EU political parties distribution may not be the best communication that is needed.



Figure 126 IRL Candidate Tunne Kelam Facebook headers screenshots

Independent candidate Lance Boxall’s political Facebook account was created in the last month of the campaigning period (in May 2014). It has one interesting post that was done in the last day of the election. It contained an apology for the voters that he is being cut off from the Estonian media and has posted in the political Facebook account a lot lately, that was the only possible way to make him visible in the elections. Also he notes that there are 2 hours left for voting and the potential candidates should vote for him. If this is the case then this message should have been presented earlier, not 2 hours before the voting ends – also in the final day of the election, the only voting possibility was on paper and not electronically.



I was allowed in only one of six webcast debates even though it was officially a drawing of lots - I asked to be in all 6 and I got 1! Other independents got 4 or 5! What are the chances of that? Other media in Estonia have also refused my offers for interview. What are they afraid of?

I understand that the Estonian language is an important issue and I promise to learn the language but it is not so easy. In Brussels and Strasbourg English is the main working language and I would make sure that I have excellent Estonian help from day one as an MEP. Vote for me today - 2hours left - doing nothing never made a difference!



Like · Comment · Share · 5 2

Figure 127 Independent candidate Lanxe Boxall Facebook posts screenshots

Independent candidate Silver Meikar’s political Facebook account profile picture and header changed over time. It seemed that Silver Meikar had some kind of strategy about what to do in different moments. He had an election buss campaign where he tried to involve potential candidates for suggesting ideas and to help find the right bus for the campaign. He also updated his current status of the campaign. One good point was also that Silver Meikar used Facebook hashtags (for example, during the bus campaign he used #bussiriot and

#euromeikar). For example, clicking on Facebook hashtag the user will see a feed of posts that include that certain hashtag.



Figure 128 Independent candidate Silver Meikar Facebook posts screenshots

An independent candidate was tagged in “Tartu Ülikooli Pärnu kolledž” but did not put any message to it. It is nice to know that he is there, but what is the message to the potential voters or fans remains a question, though, in the comments’ feed there is little discussion going on about what he is doing there. EKRE’s young candidate Jaak Madisson informed and shared EKRE’s Facebook post that EKRE’s new webpage is available (information is shared at the beginning of May 2014).

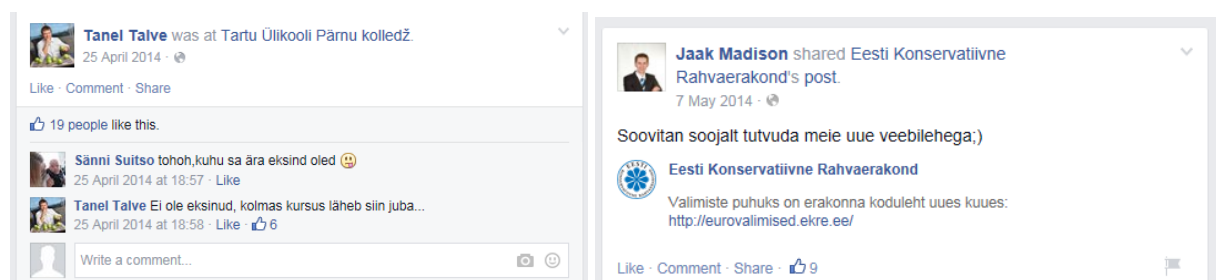


Figure 129 Candidates Facebook posts screenshots

IRL candidates Yoko Alender, Anvar Samost and Erik-Niiles Kross did have campaign posters on their political Facebook accounts that asked to vote for one of the three candidates. This kind of approach is good way to make the candidate marketing even better. Campaign was about that potential voters should vote for normal people like them and do not let others decide the voting result. The posters were in the party colors and also had IRL party logo.

Promoting other candidates was not common in the EERE2014 election campaigning. SDME young candidate Liina Raud's political Facebook account had an interesting post with a picture of sunshine and text about that it is not very good to be in Estonia because some bad things had happened there and that it is also cold. This text was posted in political Facebook account that is for candidate campaigning. This kind of messages shows that the candidate is not interested to be in Estonia and to stand for the Estonian rights in Europe – does not give positive emotions to the potential reader.



Figure 130 Independent candidates Facebook posts screenshots

KESK candidate Oudekki Loone did bring out some points that were against her party overall views in her political Facebook account – for example, she asked potential voters to e-vote. It was not common that candidates shared different views that were against the party's views. The independent candidate Kristiina Ojuland's personal Facebook had a post where she introduced the political Facebook account and called to like the page. This approach was used several times on Facebook by other candidates as well.



Figure 131 Candidates Facebook posts screenshots

The Facebook of REFORM candidate Kaja Kallas did seem to have more multimedia posts, above average than others. For example she shared pictures about a pillow fight with a theatre actor. The independent candidate Indrek Tarand brought out a campaign flyer.



Figure 132 Candidates Facebook posts screenshots

KESK main candidate Edgar Savisaar shared the party’s Facebook post where there was candidate picture and information that he is young-minded and had a call to action for sharing the post and liking the page. Independent candidate Jevgeni Krishtafovitsh shared a picture from a coffee shop in Amsterdam and also an opinion about cannabis usage.

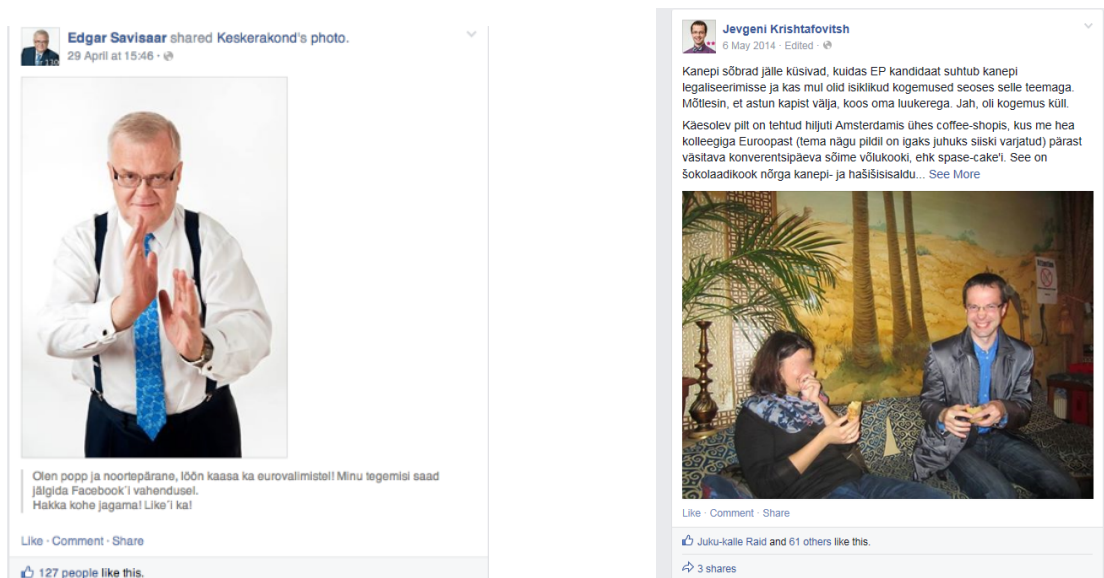


Figure 133 Candidates Facebook posts screenshots

Some Twitter accounts had professionally designed headers where there were candidate names and election numbers (for example, the Twitter account of REFORM candidate Arto Aas). There were also accounts where was no header, no picture or even no profile picture

(for example SMDE candidate Marju Lauristin). REFORM party candidate Kaja Kallas and independent candidate Indrek Tarand had a profile picture but no header design.

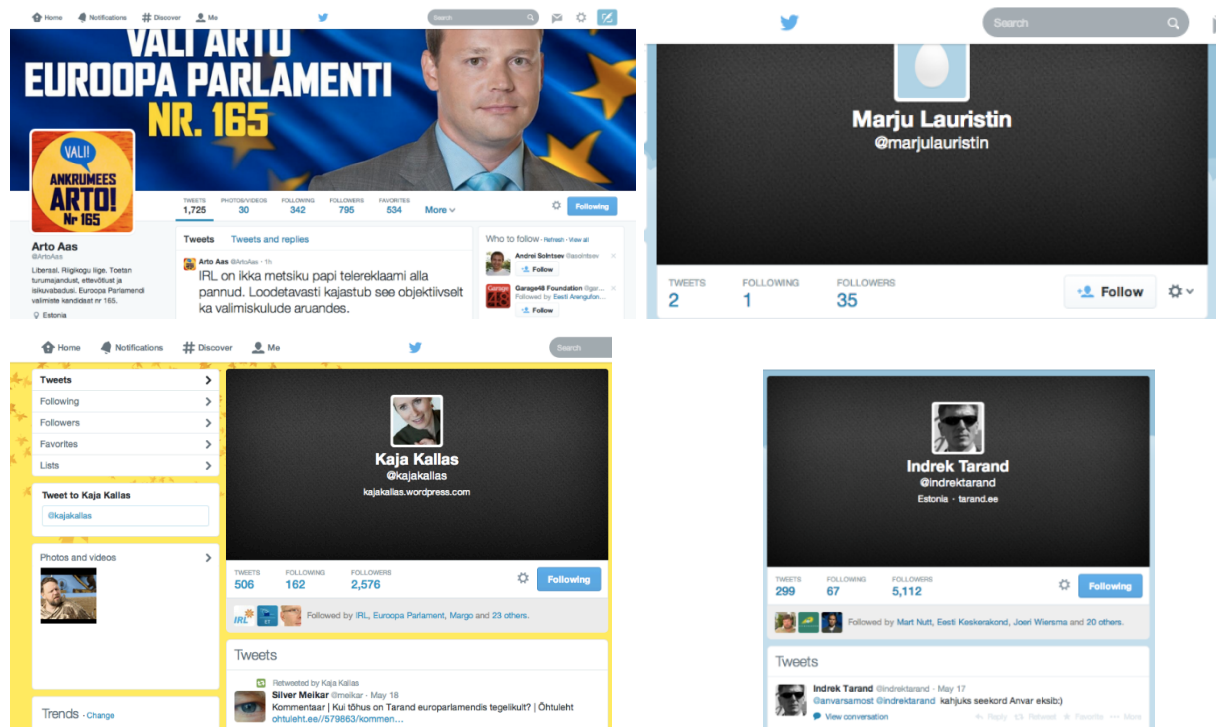


Figure 134 Candidates Twitter headers screenshots

IRL candidate Mart Nutt had a professionally designed Twitter account and also election related information. It seems that Mart Nutt used his Twitter channel for promoting his election. IRL candidate Tarmo Kruusimäe had a tweet, that was strong and a not very polite one about KESK candidate Yana Toom.

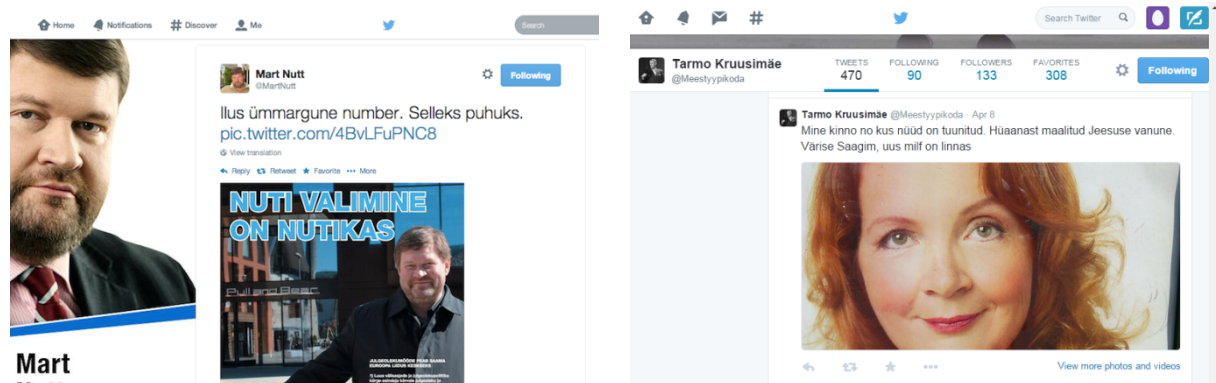


Figure 135 Candidates Twitter posts screenshots

REFORM candidate Kaja Kallas used her Twitter for letting her followers know about her media coverage and new blog posts. Twitter was used to promote news and articles already made. Tweets were structured in a good way – for example, if links were used then it was understood where the link is directed.

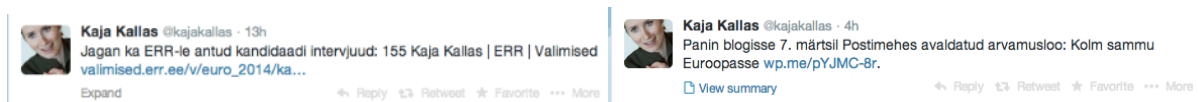


Figure 136 REFORM candidate Kaja Kallas Twitter posts screenshot

REFORM candidate Arto Aas also tweeted personal opinions – for example, he brought out that some politicians use PR firms for communication and it differs a lot from their daily self-expression.

KESK candidate Olga Sõtnik had some post in Facebook and in Twitter where there was only a tiny URL tweeted and no information what is the post all about. It is confusing for the tweet reader and it will not attract to click on the link, because it is not clear where it is directed and what it is all about.

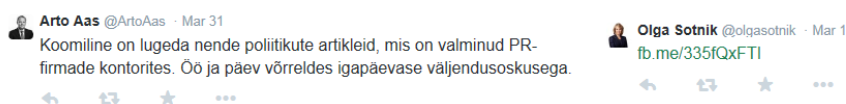


Figure 137 Candidates Twitter posts screenshots

IRL candidate Yoko Alender had different ways of presenting directions to Facebook in Twitter. In some tweets there was only a tiny Facebook URL and no other information. In some tweets there were some slogans – for example, “Lets go to school” and a Facebook link. It seems that the tweets were not structured. Yoko thanked the electors in Twitter.



Figure 138 Yoko Alender Twitter posts screenshot

For example, the YouTube channel of SDME candidate Marianne Mikko had a professionally designed header with her picture, election number, slogan and home page address. It seems that party supported the channel because it is in the SDME party colors. Also Marianne

Mikko had a professional profile picture. It seems that she used YouTube channel for election.

KESK candidate Kadri Simson made YouTube channel for the election and had a video with medium quality for the election.

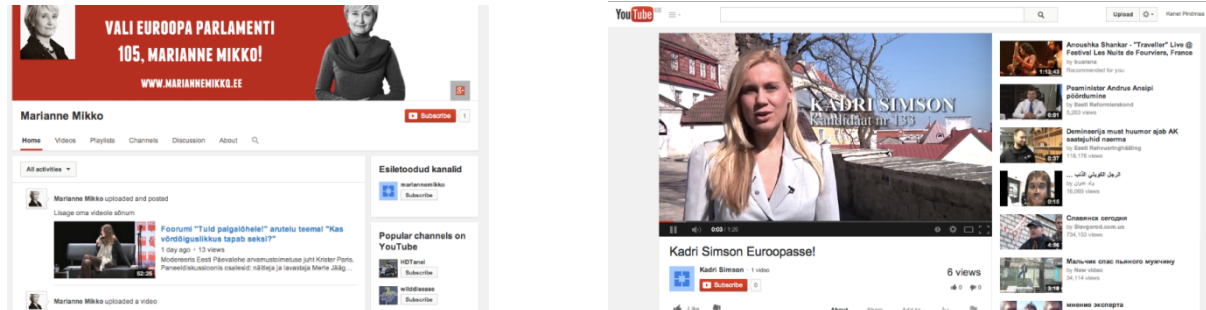


Figure 139 Candidates Youtube channels screenshots

Independent candidate Kristiina Ojuland used YouTube ad for her campaigning. The video was not very professionally made.



Figure 140 Independent candidate Kristiina Ojuland YouTube ad screenshot

Overall, from all the 10 candidates (SME 1, IRL 4, KESK 2 and Independent 3) all had the social media channels for communication with the potential electors. For example, independent candidate Indrek Tarand also had all the social media channels. Facebook personal accounts were widely used by candidates but there was not that much focus on campaigning. Facebook political accounts were owned approximately by 30% of the candidates. This is a good way to give information to support groups and it should be used by candidates in the future more often. Twitter accounts were used approximately by 30% of the candidates. Twitter is a good channel for approaching journalists, because they monitor the politicians opinions and write about it. YouTube channels were used by 23% of the candidates. Some candidates did support others in social media, but there were very few of them (for example Yoko Alender and Erik-Niiles Kross). Also, the communication in candidates social media channels were one-sided.

4.8 Interviews Outcome

The goal of interviews is to get a better view of the current e-campaigning status and future possibilities. The author of the thesis tried to do interviews with the SDME, IRL, KESK, EKRE and REFORM parties; independent candidates Indrek Tarand and Erik-Niiles Kross and Kristjan Vassil, political research expert.

It was possible to carry out three interviews out of five parties (with REFORM, KESK and IRL). The interviews were not recorded. SDME and EKRE did not want to give interviews, though they responded by e-mail. SDME was ready to give answers by e-mail or met in person at first, but at some point nobody answered to any e-mails that the author of the thesis sent. EKRE election candidate Martin Helme answered by e-mail, that all the election campaigning are organized and monetized by themselves (by EKRE candidates), also that EKRE does not have time to deal with the questions of the author of the thesis because they have more important things to aim their resources and time.

Independent candidates Indrek Tarand and Erik- Niiles Kross were tried to be reached by e-mail several times, but there was no answer.

Political research expert Krisjan Vassil had busy times, but agreed to have an interview in person. The interview was not recorded.

The REFORM party was very open-minded about the interview and shared information like there was nothing to hide. The meeting lasted for 1hour. It was the easiest to arrange out of the interviews from all the parties. The interview was carried out with the person who dealt with the e-campaigning.

REFORM party did not have a certain e-campaigning strategy. They were looking what other parties are doing and taking action on that basis. Every candidate has an individual plan – it depends on how interested the candidate is, nothing is pushed from the party's side. The party has a brand book, but it is not mandatory to be followed by the candidates. If the candidate had some technical or marketing questions, then the party had a special person whom could be turned to. If the candidate wanted to do an article or a story to online media, then they had a special PR person for that who looked over the materials. Candidates social media channels were not looked over from the party's side. The party also has suggestions for candidates to create, the so-called virtual footstep. In the communicational part there was a goal that an election information and introduction about the REFORM party election program is published for the electors.

The REFORM party's technical person has a plan to upgrade all candidate blogs to Tumblr platform. If some technical feature is created, then it is looked, that it is responsive for all screens. Online target group are all Internet users. YouTube is also used for TV commercials. The REFORM party had a plan to do the candidates e-election training in online media. There is a plan, that the REFORM party does not compare themselves to other parties.

The KESK party was also open minded. The interview arrangement took some time, but the interview was productive. Three persons from the KESK party's side participated (one of the persons was communicational manager). The meeting lasted for 1 hour. The e-campaigning is not a priority for the KESK party, because the target group electors are different. The television is the main aim and the print media is the second priority. Approximately 8% of the campaigning is done by e-campaigning. The KESK party does e-campaigning, because other parties do. KESK party has action plans for e-campaigning and Facebook. When a new web was created, then it was taken into account that it needed to be safe, with modern design and it needed to work on mobile. The web is in Estonian and it was decided on previous web version visitors statistics. In online media there is Russian language used as well. In online media the main focus goes to bigger portals and county newspapers. In all channels there is the aim to present the same message (not different messages through different channels). The KESK party has no plan to compare themselves with other parties. There is also a special election newspaper done that is printed in 100 000 copies.



Figure 141 KESK party election newspaper.

Direction to e-election is not done, because KESK party does not trust and support the e-election.

The IRL party was quite open minded. At first, there was no intention to meet because of the busy times, but later the person who was responsible for digital media agreed to meet. The meeting lasted for 2 hours. The IRL has a tactical plan for e-campaigning. They look what other parties are doing and on that basis action is being taken. Twitter and Facebook communication are being used. On the channel basis and depending on target groups, different communication is being done. IRL has Russian language in Facebook and in web. Donations and supporters are not their high priority. If someone wants to help, then they are not pushed away. The main goal is to get the message to electors and to be active in the media. Comparison with other parties is not a goal.

Political research expert Kristjan Vassil was very cooperation-oriented and it was easy to settle up the meeting with him. The meeting was arranged by e-mail. Kristjan Vassil brought out that the thesis should contain overview about the parties costs. Information about costs can be found from EMOR research company homepage or ask information from Kaarel Tarand. Also it was suggested how the costs are related to votes. Kristjan Vassil suggested to look through materials from Triin Vihalem and Mihkel Solvak.

Overall, the interviews showed that there is not proper strategic view for e-campaigning. Mainly, it is looked what others are doing and on that basis action is taken.

4.9 2014 Elections Campaigning Costs

The overall information on costs of the election campaigning is not available on Internet or in any publications that is 100% reliable and true. The parties funding monitoring committee (“Erakondade Rahastamise Järevalve Komisjon – ERJK) have some data about the costs of campaigning, but there is a lot of data missing and the author of the thesis cannot take this data for making analysis and conclusions. The data is taken 22.04.16 from ERJK web:

<http://www.erjk.ee/et/aruanded/valimiskampaniad?report=47608>

EIP, EKRE, ERR parties have no data about the costs. EÜV party has spent 276 EUR on campaigning and there is no spending on the Internet. The REFORM party has spent 2270 EUR and no spending on the Internet. The SDME party has spent 3062 EUR and 2362 EUR on the Internet. The IRL party has spent 23 011 EUR and 546 EUR on the Internet. From IRL party spending, 5831 EUR was spent on Tunne Kelam’s campaigning (personal funds). The KESK party has spent 40 963 EUR and 3591 EUR on the Internet. From the overall spending

of the KESK party, Yana Toom spent 10 752 EUR for campaigning and there are no costs related to Internet campaigning. For example, independent candidate Indrek Tarand spent 6068 EUR and no costs on the Internet.

Overall, the author of the thesis did not find complete information about the costs of campaigning. The ERJK had some information about some parties and independent candidates, but it was not enough for analysis of how do the costs effect votes.

4.10 2014 Election Results

EEPE2014 had 902 873 potential voters⁷. Actual voters were 329 766 (36.5% from potential voters). There were 103 151 e-voters (31.3% from actual voters). It shows that the proportion of the e-voters is significant at the elections.

During EEPE2014 two candidates from REFORM party got elected (Andrus Ansip and Kaja Kallas), one candidate from SDME party (Marju Lauristin), one candidate from KESK party (Yana Toom), one independent candidate (Indrek Tarand) and one IRL candidate (Tunne Kelam). Andrus Ansip and Indrek Tarand got over 40 000 votes (for example, that is twice as much than Kaja Kallas or Tunne Kelam who got elected as well).

Party or independent candidate	Name	Votes
Eesti Reformierakond	ANDRUS ANSIP	45022
Üksikkandidaat	INDREK TARAND	43369
Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond	MARJU LAURISTIN	26868
Eesti Keskerakond	YANA TOOM	25251
Eesti Reformierakond	KAJA KALLAS	21498
Erakond Isamaa ja Res Publica Liit	TUNNE-VÄLDO KELAM	18767

Figure 142 Party or independent candidate results. Info from: <http://ep2014.vvk.ee/voting-results-en.html>

Overall the participation of EEPE2014 voters was quite low (36.5% from potential voters), but the e-voters were 31.3% from actual voters, that is quite significant. The candidate that won the elections were: Andrus Ansip (REFORM), Indrek Tarand (independent candidate), Marju Lauristin (SDME), Yana Toom (KESK), Kaja Kallas (REFORM) and Tunne Kelam (IRL).

⁷ Voters info: <http://ep2014.vvk.ee/detailed.html>

4.11 Closing Remarks

The results of the survey topic gave an overview about parties, young parties and candidates monitoring results, also the interviews output and EEPE2014 election results.

On party websites it was monitored how they were built and how they worked as campaign tools. Several party websites were updated and even new sites created during the time of the campaign.

On the youth party channels it was monitored how they supported the elections and candidates. From youth parties IRL, SDME and REFORM stood out from other parties, because they made some effort to support certain candidates. IRL and SDME youth parties put effort to support one young candidate.

Party and independent candidate online media was monitored. News and articles in online newspapers and portals were looked through and also what was the communication through online ads.

Candidates personal websites and blogs were monitored. The structure of websites, information and campaign elements were taken into account.

Parties' and candidates' campaigns in popular social networks were monitored. It was looked that how big was the channel auditorium (for example how much fans were in a certain party Facebook), campaign and party elements etc.

The output of interviews was also brought out that described the parties' view about their e-campaigning tactical and strategic plans.

EEPE2014 costs and results also were described, though the cost point did not give any solid information for the conclusion on this topic.

In topic Conclusion (topic number 6) the results of the survey topic monitoring results are analysed.

5 Theoretical Background

5.1 Introduction

Identification of current practices of Internet campaigning worldwide and in Estonia will be shortly described, because the main focus was on monitoring EEPE2014. The theoretical background topic is literature study that will give extra information for the conclusion part of the thesis. The literature samples used are carefully chosen and are mainly university researches or theses. Theoretical background topic will give an overview about the new medium called Internet, online campaigning, online news, online ads, homepages and blogs, social media points. These points are also viewed in “Results of the survey” topic and both of the topics will support making a better conclusions for the thesis.

5.2 New Medium – Internet

In political campaigning there is mainly television, radio, newspapers, posters and Internet used. Television and radio used to be the citizens choices for getting information but the focus is now going to cable television and the new medium - Internet (2). The role of Internet in political communication is important and it is a growing medium (7; 11; 16). It has more information and a more continuous accessibility than other mediums. It means that politicians have a harder time not to tell the truth to citizens and to hide their mistakes (3; 13; 15). The Internet is making political communication more transparent (11; 17; 22; 28). Politicians can spread their wanted information in Internet with different channels that have different target groups – social media, video channels, web, blogs, online newspapers etc.

The Internet will give information about the election program, candidate’s personal information and views and it is also being used to communicate directly with voters (1). One of the best characteristics of the Internet is its interactivity (24; 28). Research showed that this kind of possibilities are not used that much in the campaigning (3).

5.3 Online Campaigning

Whatever campaigning is done and what medium or channel is used, it is very important to know what is the target group of the campaign and what are the certain mediums of target groups (14). Some candidates communicate better in some media channels than others and from that side it is important to choose the correct medium for the goal needed. The wrong medium or channel can bring up negative emotions to audience even if the content of the communication is correct (2; 11). So, it is wise not to be everywhere but rather in the right place with right message (19).

Currently in this topic the Internet target group for online media is viewed. In Estonia there was one research carried out, which stated that age is not an extremely strong predictor of Internet voting, gender is a moderate predictor of e-voting and the urban-rural cleavage does not play any role, though, Internet voting is a more probable among those with higher levels of education. Language also affects online campaigning – it depends on which country the election is carried out and how many different ethnic groups are there that speak different languages (5). Lusoli and Ward (2005) found that young people were higher consumers of online news and information than other age groups (9; 11; 16; 19; 21).

It is stated, that online campaigning is successful in addressing traditional media, but not in attracting voters (1). The author of the thesis does not agree on this one, because through interactive solutions and through communication in both ways there can be new solutions made that traditional media cannot do. Online campaigning also increases the interest among voters who are already interested (8).

Political ads have three goals:

- To show candidate in a positive perspective
- To say bad things about other candidates
- To protect themselves from other candidates attacks.

Ads can be divided in two:

- Theme ads, that deal with a certain question or problem
- Publicity ads, that have the goal of showing the candidates' positive characteristics.

(3)

Good election practices on campaigning should focus on the party or candidate politics, not criticizing opponents (4).

Mostly the potential voters who search information on parties or campaigns are unsure about their voting preferences (4). This means that it is very important that how does the party's or candidate's digital footprint look. Professionals and specialists who know media and audience in marketing field are gaining a bigger part of making the parties messages visible. Politicians need to act actively to keep a proper status of them, because on the Internet information is constantly changing (3).

In online media it is easier for individuals to stand out (3; 23). Internet has lots of free tools and channels where one can publish the information needed for the right target group.

It is stated, that online campaigning grows rapidly two weeks before the election day (3). So it is important that online strategy is thought through and right communication is done on the right time.

5.4 Online News

It is important that the candidates get the right information to their potential voters. It is important that through different mediums and channels right targeting is made. For political campaigning printed newspapers and online news are used. Also Boulianne (2009) states, that *political technology use has a positive effect on traditional, offline forms of participation (6).* They are usually different – approximately 8% of print media was presented in online media. With the same content news will spread more easily to different online news channels (3) and it is a big cost efficiency if it is used in the right way. On the Internet there is a lot of information. Potential voters need to go to the information through by themselves, but in print media the information is sorted out by journalists (3; 19). So it is very important how the candidates make their content more visible in the online news and how to find the potential voters more easily.

5.5 Online Ads

Online ads do not give lots of information at first sight, but they could be interactive and link to other sources. So it is important that the ad is attractive and the potential voter wants to click for more information. Design, message, and colors are important and it needs to look professional to gain credibility.

Internet ads are important because:

- Internet users are quality audience
- Internet will be used, when other media is not used
- On the internet commercials will be seen there
- Online ad will connect messages and will make call to action
- Compared to other mediums, Internet ads are less expensive than others
- On the internet there the audience can be targeted
- On the internet others messages can be answered quickly
- Interactivity
- If the commercial is funny, then voters tend to share the commercial with others
- Internet commercials can make dialogue that other mediums do not

5.6 Homepages/Blogs

Because the election results are hard to predict, then candidates use different technologies in their campaigning (26). Most of the Internet campaigning (USA) will focus on web, but it is shown, that candidates do not know how to make potential voters visit the website (3). One point is that website is not that attractive and another is that how easily the website is found in search engines (for example how good is the website's SEO - search engine optimization).

There are studies carried out where it is stated that interactive features make potential voters feel more politically committed (28) and tend to revisit their websites, though websites often lack interactivity (1). In the 2010 UK online campaigning individuals from older age groups with well educated background and in the higher social class are more likely influenced to vote by looking at candidates homepages/blogs rather than acting out of loyalty for a political party (10; 12). Homepages need to have linking to existing social media platforms because potential voters don't need to find the sources on their own. Voters expect from the candidates to have a professional homepage – it is the candidates brand (11).

5.7 Social Media

Social media is all about sharing and interaction with potential voters (23; 27). The content should always be fresh and users should be engaged into discussions (14). Facebook, Twitter or YouTube account indicates that the candidate is visible and technically open-minded, though it does not lead for more votes (1; 23).

In the 2011 Estonian Parliament elections Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were used.

On Facebook accounts the interaction with potential voters was mainly one-sided. What was given, was the election programs and candidate information. Sometimes the information was difficult to find. Also on Facebook there was not that much of a campaigning made. Facebook fans and votes were not in correlation. There can be lots of Facebook friends but the candidate with fewer friends can have more votes. Personal friends and political campaigning should be separated. Social media is an important channel where successful campaigns could be run with a small amount of money (11; 13; 20; 26; 27). The candidates fame is a deciding factor for friend list amount and on that side it is not important if the Facebook page was created few months or some years before the elections. Facebook is more often used by politicians than, for example, Twitter, because there is a limit of 140 characters (24) and it is considered to be too restrictive. Facebook is a great place for having two-way communication (23), but it tended to be one-sided. It was unclear why politicians were on Facebook and what was their goal.

Twitter mainly links to other channels, for example, blogs, Facebook and websites, also, there is not that much of big discussions with the Twitter followers.

YouTube is not that active of a channel currently and mainly there are videos uploaded that are used on TV, which is not bad thing to share already made material (18; 23).

5.8 Closing Remarks

Theoretical background topic gave a small overview about the new medium called the Internet, online campaigning, online news, online ads, homepages, blogs and social media.

The role of Internet and online campaigning in political communication is important and it is a growing medium. The most useful characteristic of the Internet is its interactivity, but it is not used that much from by candidates in their campaigning. It is very important to know who are the target groups of the campaign and what are certain mediums for the target groups. After making one quality message, it is easy to spread the information through different channels on the Internet. Online campaigning also tends to be cheaper than other mediums if it is done in the right way and from that many individual candidates can gain votes that have not that big campaigning budgets.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

In this conclusion paragraph, one finds an overview of the suggestions on how to improve Internet campaigning during political elections. Further development and research are also proposed under this paragraph.

6.2 Campaigns on official party websites

All parties participating in the elections have websites. The current study states that in case of interactive websites, the potential voters visit the websites several times to get the required information. The study also states that there are not that many interactive political websites out there. The same goes for the websites during the elections analysed in the current paper.

Out of eight parties, five of them have somewhat interactive websites but there is no good example to bring forward. Some moving pictures and videos can be found on these websites but no type of solution that would make the voter revisit the site.

For example there is no open discussion platform on these websites where politicians and voters could interact. EKRE has a discussion platform where one needs to register and this platform does not seem to be that open to public and active discussions.

Thus, at the moment, none of the parties offer a discussion platform.

Official websites of the parties should have more interactive solutions for the potential voters to be involved in a discussion.

Information about the election campaign should also be systematically presented on the websites. For example, minimum of two election campaign related posts per week. There should also be photos of the candidates and if they have an election number, that should also be shown at all times. Website should be kept updated and important information should be presented over and over again so that the potential voters would remember it.

While talking about the structural side of the website, the author of the current paper would like to state that overall, there was too much information on the sites and important information was not prioritized.

The author finds that structural wise, REFORM, SMDE and KESK had the best websites because the main focus was on the elections and other news and information were presented as secondary.

REFORM party had one site for the elections and daily info sharing (as well as the KESK party's site). The author of the current thesis thinks that this is a good approach because all the information is on one site and people, who visit it on regular basis, get useful information fast and quickly. For example, SDME and IRL had special pages or layers for bringing the elections into focus. SDME party's special page was done nicely – it had good structure, information and it provided background to the candidates, photos, links, colours of the party etc. IRL had a special layer that included all the necessary information but from a structural point of view, it somewhat lacked focus. It should be well thought through what kind of information is the most important and needs to be highlighted, and what kind of information should be presented as secondary, tertiary etc. If these things have been better thought through, the priority levels should have been different.

Less information should have been presented and in case of the site visitor needing more information, this information should be able to be found. Less is more. The special layer on IRL website did not work on mobile devices; the sites of REFORM, KESK and SDME party sites did work on mobile devices. Considering the current technological and usability trends, it is very important that the websites work on mobile devices. This is a must when structuring a website.

The websites of REFORM, KESK, SDME presented their special party colours very nicely.

Seven parties out of eight had the possibility to donate on their websites. It seems that getting donations is not that big of a priority for the parties and while giving interviews, the party representatives also mentioned that there is a possibility to donate on their websites but they are not imposing it on anyone visiting their site and thus, it is not the first thing, visitors would see.

One could mainly find the bank account number and other necessary information to make a payment. REFORM party presents a really good interactive solution which does not require the need to insert extra information and a donation can be made via a few clicks (bank link solution).

The description of the election platforms of the candidates is also an important part of informing the voters about the views and plans of the parties or independent candidates. The platforms are usually long and it takes time to go through the whole platform. Seven parties out of eight had the election platforms presented on their websites. Save function is also important but not all parties websites provide this. It is also wise to bring out the most important topics and have a little summary because all the web site visitors are not eager to read the whole platform. Keeping it short and simple is the way to go. Election platform is

also supported by the campaigning message that should sum up the main focus during the elections. REFORM and KESK parties had short, simple and clear campaigning messages that were also presented many times. SDME was focused on the main ideas from the platform but one did not have the possibility to save the platform.

With EEPE, a chosen candidate is elected to the European Parliament not the party. Thus, it is important to have the introductions of the candidates on the website. Six parties out of eight had candidate introduction on their site. Listing the candidates is also important, because parties have to choose who to focus on. REFORM party presented clear information about the candidates and their website also featured a clear listing. Out of all the websites the author analysed, this kind of information was presented the best by REFORM party. For example, EER party had no information about the candidates. There were pictures but no introductions. SDME party presented the contacts of the candidates, their life stories, numbers and videos about them on their website – one was able to find proper information about the candidate. The number of the candidate is also important because it is related to candidate and during the election process, this is what the voter marks down - not all the parties had the numbers of the candidates presented on their websites.

Three parties out of eight had a link to e-voting. Most of the potential voters use the Internet and out of all the voters, 1/3 voted via the Internet. Still, some of the parties do not want to promote e-voting because e-voting is against their views. But, it is wise to let the website users know when the e-voting begins, where it can be done and who are the candidates to choose from. E-voting should be one click away from the web pages. (REFORM, IRL and SMDE had this kind of approach).

The timing of presenting the information did not seem to affect the voting results but it is better to start informing the voters as early as possible. For example, REFORM party was the first to come out with the information about the elections and they also presented the election platforms first (it was three months before the elections). During the interviews with the representatives of the parties, it was established that it is not important to come out with the information during the earliest stages; instead, the most important thing is to maximize the information flow during the two weeks before the elections day. The author of the thesis still believes that it is better to inform the potential voters in the early stages.

In general, websites play a very important role in the election campaigning because this is the first starting point where the party is able to gather together all the necessary information that they would like to present to the potential voter. During the EEPE2014 campaigning, the

websites lacked of proper interactivity options and there were no platforms for the candidates and potential voters to have discussions. Many parties developed special sites for campaigning but the author of the thesis believes that it is good to have all the communication on one website (REFORM party's website is a good example of this during the analysed elections). Some websites (like IRL's) had too much information that was not prioritized and this caused the potential voters to lose focus on the page. It is important to have some information prioritized and when the site visitor needs to read additional information, they should be able to do that as well. The colours of the parties, their logos, elements, photos of candidates, their election numbers etc. should also be presented on the website so that the users could unconsciously remember the information and the site.

In general, the author of the thesis believes that REFORM party had the best website during the EERE2014 elections.

6.3 Campaigns on official youth party channels

Four youth parties out of eight were active on supporting the EERE2014 elections candidates. It was mainly done through the websites but there was some activity on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. They did not support all the candidates in general, but mainly the young candidates participating in the elections. All the youth parties who were active on supporting the elections put their main focus on one candidate. All youth parties' websites were created separately from the main party's website. The structure of the website was different, the elements of the party colours etc. Even if the messages of the youth party differ from those of the main parties, it would be wise for the youth and main parties websites to have the same colours, elements, symbols etc. Two youth parties stood out while analysing the communication and websites – IRL's youth party and SMDE's youth party. IRL youth party had up to date website that was the only one to feature responsive web possibilities. The site also looked fresh and the colours and logos of the party were present - but it was presented differently from the main party's site. It can be said that the youth party's website looked more up to date than that of the main party's. IRL's youth party mainly supported candidate Linda Eichler – they featured news, photos, introduction etc. SDME youth party's website did not look that professional web trends wise (out of date), but they were actively supporting young candidate Linda Raud by posting news, events information, videos etc.

In general, youth parties did not support the elections and candidates as much as they could have. SMDE and IRL youth parties stood out amongst the others for making an effort on

supporting the candidates. Websites were the main communication channels. The websites of the youth parties should look the same as the sites of the main parties - same elements, colours, structure etc.

6.4 Party and independent candidates campaigns in online media

Out of 88 candidates 21% (18) were not presented in online media. EKRE party had seven candidates that were not presented in online media. During the interview with the representative of EKRE, it was stated that their candidates mostly used their own resources for campaigning and this could be the cause of them not been presented in online media.

The literature study of the current paper states that information should be directly addressed to the potential voters - targeting is important. Online media ads need to be interactive, well designed, professionally made drawing attention. Ads should also call to action because then, it can be directed to the target group and make them want read more information or take certain actions (for example to e-vote).

The author of the thesis believes that it does not make a difference whether the news about the candidates is written by the candidates or by journalists - as long as it provides right information to the potential voters and the channel is right. During EERE2014, one was able to find both – articles by both, the journalist and by candidates or their office. Tunne Kelam is a good example of someone who spread the same news in different mediums. The author of the current paper considers this wise because while the news has already been created, it is worth spreading it through different mediums for reaching different potential voters. It was established in the current paper that Tunne Kelam spread one news to different online newspaper at different times.

During the interviews, it was established that spreading information some time before the beginning of the elections helps the potential voters to remember the message. The author of the thesis believes that spreading the messages should start at least three months before the elections and it should be done strategically. Indrek Tarand had won at previous European Parliament elections in Estonia and he also participated in EERE2014. He mainly spread information during the same month the actual voting took place (Indrek Tarand is an independent candidate and when it comes to resources, he has no financial support by any party).

Indrek Tarand and IRL's candidate Anvar Samost also used clever branding. Indrek Tarand used a yellow sweater and each time, he was seen wearing it each time he was presented in

any sort of media. Anvar Samost used a blue suite with orange elements on it. These kinds of actions make it easier for the voters to remember the candidates and this also makes the candidates seem more emotional.

Independent candidate Silver Meikar also made use of the online news quite well. He made an announcement that he needed money for setting up his candidature for EERE2014 and he also organized a bus trip around Estonia during which, he kept people informed about his activities. This is a good way to involve potential voters and make emotional attachments to the candidates. Candidates need to do things differently and have interesting approaches for the journalists to cover them so that the news would be picked up and presented to the audience.

There were a lot of banner ads in the online media at the time which were mainly ordered by the parties. Most of the banners were professional, these included the colours and elements of the parties, photos of the candidates and call to action links to attract people to visit their websites or go to e-voting website. REFORM, SDME and IRL parties had good banners. The author of the thesis thinks that the banners of REFORM and SMDE parties stood out from the others. Their banners were very minimalistic which is a good thing because important information is kept in focus and the potential voter gets the most important information. The messages on those banners were presented in a short manner. There were also links to party websites, video introductions and e-voting website.

In general, it is important that one piece of news is spread through different news mediums so that it would catch the eye of the potential voters. These news need to impress the journalists in order for the information to be picked up and be presented by them. Many candidates rather spread the information at the beginning of the voting period but the author the thesis author states that it is important to start campaigning three months before the elections start. Candidates should think about branding themselves because that makes it easier for the voters to remember the candidates. During EERE2014, some candidates did some branding and they stood out from the others (Indrek Tarand and Anvar Samost). Financed banners on online news sites were done professionally during EERE2014. REFORM and SDME stood out from others with their minimalistic banners which provided prioritized information for their potential candidates. The banners also included calls to actions.

6.5 Candidates personal websites (blogs) as campaign tools

Out of 88 candidates 58% (51) of them had webpages. Most of these pages were blogs. REFORM party's candidate Laine Randjärv had the most posts in general compared to other blogs but she rather presented the news about politics than about the elections. Altogether, IRL party's candidates had the most of elections related posts. The literature study of the current thesis states that in the USA, most of the potential voters focus on the websites. Thus, it is important to think about how to draw people's attention to the websites and how to make the these attractive (website interactivity is very important).

During the EEPE2014 elections, the websites mainly presented regular simple design and no party or campaign elements and colours were presented. There were no professional websites and most of the sites were not responsive. Kaja Kallas changed her webpage design and platform at the beginning of April. The new page looked better than the previous one but it did not follow the current web trends. One good thing about Kaja Kallas's page was that the visitors could sign up for push notifications about the updates of her blog posts.

The author of the thesis suggests that during the time period of the elections, the webpages or blogs should contain the campaign colours, messages, candidates election numbers and all the necessary information related to the elections. If it was possible, the pages should have been created by professional web designers and not created on the basis of free templates found on the web. Blogs should also have push notification systems in case of new posts. REFORM party's candidate Kaja Kallas is a good example of this.

In general, over half of the candidates had homepages/blogs that had simple design solutions and there were no campaign elements used on those. Also the messages of the blog were not that focused on the campaigning. It can be said that the potential of blogging as a campaigning tool was not used. The author of the thesis suggests that before the elections, webpages should contain campaign elements and if possible, investments should be made to create professional websites/pages that are user friendly and catch the eye of the voter.

6.6 Party campaigns in popular social networks (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube)

Out of eight parties, 50% of them had users on popular social networks sites - SDME, IRL, KESK and REFORM parties. EÜV and EIP parties had no users on social network sites. It seems that the content was created but it was not focused on growing the fan base and

attracting more followers or video watchers. Firstly, the focus should be on growing the audience and then, on the content. In the literature study of the current paper, it is stated that if popular social networks are used, it shows that the party or the candidate is open minded. Social networks were also used during the 2011 Estonian Parliament elections but it tended to be one-sided. Yet, social networks are great places for two-sided communication. During the 2011 Estonian Parliament elections, Facebook campaigning was not used as much as it should have been. Also, the number of Facebook fans and the number of votes were not in correlation. During EERE2014, popular social networks were used much more than during the 2011 Estonian Parliament elections. While the communication was mainly one sided, there were a few good examples of two sided communication.

REFORM party's Facebook campaigning was quite good. Their Facebook page also had the biggest fan base out of all other active Facebook accounts. They changed their cover photo according to the certain time and need. From the design point of view, everything had been done professionally. Its design was clean and clear with minimal noise level. The messages of the party and its colours were presented and other party related elements as well. It seems that their communication was well thought through and a professional copywriter was used as well. The main focus was on REFORM party's main candidate Andrus Ansip.

REFORM party's Twitter account was informative and there they shared important links related to the elections. Yet, the goal of their Twitter account was a little bit unclear. Their main candidate at these elections, Andrus Ansip was in the main focus of the communication. There should have been more cross linking with the REFORM party's Facebook content because there was good content there.

KESK party's activities on Facebook seemed to be not that well thought through as REFORM party's. KESK party changed Facebook covers depending on the current situation. REFORM party's account had a more professional general look compared to that of KESK party's. Its design was not that clean and clear and at some points, it seemed a little bit unprofessional. Yet, other types of mediums were presented there - outdoor posters, videos, online news, and information about new website. It is good to have other mediums presented - cross media marketing is a good thing because the content has already been created. Candidates' priority list with their numbers and photos were also posted. KESK party's Facebook page also informed about their new website and asked the visitors' opinion about the page. This is good way of making two-sided communication and the initiative came from the party. It seemed

that KESK party tried the two-way communication the most because there were many questions to the potential voters about their opinion on certain questions.

KESK party's Twitter account was the most active compared to other parties' Twitter accounts. It contained the most posts. There were lots of links to social media channels and online news. It was not quite clear whether the elections were in focus because there were a lot of political tweets. But at the same time, when a party presents information about politics, potential voters see that and the goals of the party in general but for gaining more success on the elections, more focus needs to be on the elections. It was good that the names of the politicians were presented in front of the tweets published through the party's general account. KESK's Twitter account featured unclear tweets as well as it was not clear what they tried to say with the tweet. Unclear tweets with little information were the problem of other parties' accounts as well. Tweets need to be clear and if there is a link to somewhere, there should be information about where the potential voter is being directed.

On IRL party's Facebook page, there were political posts from different online newspapers, candidates Facebook accounts, priority list of the candidates with their photos, and a link to e-voting. Poster posts containing the countdown to the elections day was a good informative way to remind the elections day. IRL party had a separate Facebook account for their youth party and they also promoted young candidates taking part from the elections.

It is a good thing to have a youth party next to the main party and the youth party can also contribute to the communication of the elections. IRL featured an interactive solution at their Facebook site called the e-salk. It seems that it was created to support the candidates. The author of the thesis did not join the e-salk because personal information was needed to join it but it remained unclear for what the information is needed. So this could be an issue for people not to join the e-salk and many people do not want to that commitment of giving away their personal data unknowing what it is used for.

IRL party's Twitter account was not so professionally designed like the one of some other parties. Although IRL promoted e-voting and featured videos of the candidates, the latter were not well made (lack of professional touch). Some of the video content was great because for example, we saw the Finnish prime minister promoting IRL, but the video did not reach the potential voters. If the content is there, it needs to be promoted so that the potential voters would get the information.

SDME party's Facebook account had professional designed covers without noise. Covers contained photos of the candidates, messages of the party and campaign, party colours and elements. Photos of the candidates, campaign messages, party colours and elements are

important things to be presented because this makes the potential voters remember the candidate and their association with the party. The voting number of the candidate is also important to be presented because at the elections station, the voter is given the name and number of the candidate. It was a good thing to feature the number of days left until the voting and information about new campaign website. SDME also had a separate Facebook account for their youth party and they supported young candidate Liina Raud through that page.

On SDME party's Twitter account, the party mainly supported their main candidate Marju Lauristin and it was done in a good informative way. There was information about Marju Lauristin's fan page and many videos of her. In general, these featured the priority list of the candidates, videos but the main focus was on promoting their main candidate Marju Lauristin. SDME party's YouTube page had the most videos compared to the other parties during the elections. There were 45 videos that was twice as much as the following party had. Videos had been made professionally and they were about their main candidate Marju Lauristin. It is worth mentioning that SDME youth party also had a YouTube channel where they presented a video supporting their candidate Liina Raud and that video got the most views out of all the campaigning videos. This video was different from the others videos – it features Liina Raud's husband who is a musician, TV host and writer. Videos were professionally made.

EKRE party's Facebook account had an average design that was not that professional. It seemed that some elements, photos were made by the candidates. The potential voters should be presented with professional material because it shows that the candidate is going to be a professional at the work they are applying as well.

There was information about the candidates priorities, information about the start of the campaign and many links to online newspapers. It is interesting that EKRE presented the main candidates of three parties (REFORM, KESK and EKRE) on the Facebook cover and it was said that there is another possibility. For the author of the thesis, it seems that it was free publicity for the REFORM's main candidate Andrus Ansip because his photo was on the EU flag and REFORM is EU minded anyway.

In general, SDME and REFORM parties social media sites were well designed and looked the most professional. Party's and election messages and elements including the photos of the candidate, their voting numbers were presented. REFORM party's sites had the best textual structure. KESK party presented two-sided communication possibility on their Facebook site which the sites of the other parties were missing. This was a good way to start a dialog with the potential voters.

To sum up, it seems that certain strategy is missing from the social network structuring. There should be a strategy but there should also be some room left for reacting on situations that was not planned.

6.7 Candidates campaigns in popular social networks (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube)

Out of 88 candidates, 82% had of them had personal account on Facebook; 31% of them had a following function, 32% of them had political Facebook accounts, 28% of them had both – personal and political accounts. 28% of the candidates had a YouTube account and 23% of them were active in those. 48% of the candidates had a Twitter account and 28% of them were active there.

Facebook personal accounts mainly contained personal information. For example, REFORM party's candidate Kaja Kallas had the most information about the elections. If the candidate focuses their campaigning on their Facebook personal account, it should contain more information about the views of the candidate, activities, visual material and information about what the candidate stands for in personal life and in the politics. The limit of friends on Facebook personal account is 5000 and this sets certain boundaries for the candidate if they want to have a proper audience and communication channel. When choosing Facebook personal account for campaigning, this should be taken into consideration and the friends list should be well thought through and contain as much of the potential voters as possible. Facebook personal accounts were mainly poorly designed and proper strategies were not used for campaigning there. These sites were mainly used for personal information and not as a communication channel for campaigning. Still, some of the candidates used it like that but the number of candidates doing so was not significant.

Only 1/3 of the candidates had created political accounts of Facebook. It is a fairly small amount because having a political account on Facebook gives more possibilities for campaigning and the sites are more focused.

It is worth to mention that 92% of IRL candidates had a political account on Facebook. It seems that the party suggested them to create a political account. IRL candidates Yoko Alender, Tunne Kelam and SDME candidate Marju Lauristin had proper description about themselves on their account. Marju Lauristin also presented her voting number, colours of the campaign and professional photos. IRL candidate Eerik-Niiles Kross had the most fans but his final votes were not in correlation with the amount of friends. He also had a nice simple

design to his Facebook political account which contained his voting number, photo, name, signature and party elements.

28% of the candidates had both - political and private Facebook accounts. The author of the thesis suggests that it is wise to keep communication with the friends and with potential voters separately - this suggestion is also mentioned in the literature study. Design wise, IRL candidate Mart Nutt had a nice campaign design on his Facebook private and political accounts – the same professional design elements were used on both of these. Independent candidate Silver Meikar used #hashtags at some of his posts that is also good way to spread the posted information even more. The author of the thesis recommends using #hashtags in Facebook, but there should not be over five #hashtags per post.

Twitter accounts mainly contained political ideas and information. The candidates were a lot more active in Twitter than on their Facebook accounts. Twitter is a good channel for informing journalists and address the very specific target group of the voters. On Twitter, it is not possible to address a bigger group of the potential voters. Although, when candidates present interesting information on Twitter, it could be picked up by journalists and be presented in the mass media and the message could reach the potential voters. Twitter accounts were mainly not professionally designed and did not look like they are used for campaigning. Although some candidates did use design elements, it was a fairly small part of them. IRL candidate Yoko Alender and independent candidate Olga Sõtnik used tiny URLs for tweets and there was no other information which makes it harder for the reader to get a clear message and the communication is not clear. In general, it can be said that Twitter is underused for campaigning.

YouTube had the average of 5 videos per a candidate who actively used this channel. It seems that there was more video material to present, but candidates did not upload the videos that actually had been made. The author of the thesis thinks that if the material is already been made, it should be shared to reach the right target groups and YouTube can be of help here. Uploading videos on YouTube is free of charge and does not cost extra for the candidate. Yet, the marketing of videos should be well thought through because the hardest part is get people watch the videos.

Whatever the communication channel is, there should be a visual photo or video of the candidate, their voting number and campaigning elements. If certain material has been produced of the candidate, this should be cross-media marketed. SDME candidate Marianne Mikko is good example of this because she used the same professional design materials, photos and overall concept on different networks (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) and it looked professional. IRL candidates Anvar Samost, Eerik-Niiles Kross and Yoko Alender used a campaigning concept of calling the voters to vote for each other. This is good approach for supporting team members and it is not considered as supporting the competitors because it is helping to spread the messages. Social media channels are very good channels for two-sided communication. It was not used in that way at all - some candidates responded to the questions of the potential voters but mainly, the communication was one-sided. The author of the thesis believes the candidates social media networks should contain more interactive solutions, more multimedia and less text. These should mainly be the channels of expressing the main points by writing or through a video and if the potential voter feels the need to read more information, there should be links to other channels.

In General, the candidates did not use popular social media networks for their campaigning as much as they could have. A lot of candidates used Facebook private accounts, but these were not used for campaigning. Only 1/3 of the candidates had Facebook political accounts which is a very good channel for campaigning and this way, personal account is kept separate from the active political campaigning. More candidates should use Facebook political accounts if they want to campaign in Facebook because it has more possibilities than Facebook's personal account. Twitter is mainly used for political communication and had even less campaign elements than the private and political Facebook accounts of the candidates. Twitter is good channel for spreading important information for the journalists and it is wise to share information already present because it could be interesting for the journalists and for the potential candidates. YouTube is underused and if candidate have videos, it would be wise to upload these to YouTube and have links to the videos on other sites. When a candidate uses different social networks for campaigning, they should be professionally designed and the same design should be used in all the channels.

6.8 Closing remarks

In this paragraph, the author gives an overview of the main suggestions for the parties and candidates on how to improve their political campaigning. Further development and research are also proposed in this paragraph.

Party websites need to be more interactive and contain the solutions for two-sided communication. There were separate pages for the campaign but the author of the thesis suggests having all the information on one official party webpage because it makes marketing easier and the supporters of the party and candidate already know the site addresses. It is very important for the party website to look professional because this reflects on how professional the candidates are at their work - whatever the party or candidates do, they need to do it in a professional manner. It is also important to have campaign elements and information about the campaigning and about candidates.

Youth parties did not support campaigning and candidates as much as they should have. Only IRL and SDME youth parties somewhat supported their candidates. Youth parties should support the campaign of their candidates via the channels they are using and these should contain party and campaigning colours, elements and information about the candidate. This part needs to be based on a certain strategy that answers questions like “how” and “why”.

Information spreading through online media is in a constant change and it is very important to act fast. It is important that the right messages address the right audiences. Online ads need to be interactive, contain call to action and be well designed. During EERE2014, online ads had been nicely done. If an article is created for the news, the same article should be spread to the right newspapers as many times as possible. IRL party candidate Tunne Kelam did spread one news to many news channels and it was a good approach. The author of the thesis states that online media campaigning should start three months before the election date. The branding of the candidate and the party should be well thought through.

The websites of the candidates were mainly blogs that were ordinarily designed and unfortunately, there were no party or campaigning elements. During the campaigning period, blogs should at least contain elements of the campaign and information about it. The sites were mainly not responsive as these should be because many potential voters use different

devices that have different screens and it should be easy to access information through each type of the screen. Creating content is one thing but in the future, candidates need think on how to get their potential candidates to visit their blogs because during EERE2014, this seemed to be a problem.

Parties popular social network sites did not focus on growing the fan base. Communication was mainly one-sided but on a positive note, KESK party did try to initiate two-sided communication by asking certain questions from their Facebook fans. The look of the Facebook account changed according to current situation. Photos of the candidates, their names and voting numbers were mainly presented but a few parties stood out with their professionally designed pages - SMDE and REFORM parties pages were a good example. In Twitter, mainly political tweets were presented and there were also tweets that were unclear for the potential voters. YouTube channel was underused but for example, SDME party's YouTube channel contained 45 videos and the quality of the videos was good and messages clear to the voters.

Candidates did not use popular social networks as much as they could have. The private accounts of Facebook mainly contained personal information and only 1/3 of the candidates had political accounts on Facebook. The design of the private accounts on Facebook and their look was not that professional and the political accounts of Facebook were slightly better because campaigning elements and photos of the candidates were present. Twitter was mainly used for spreading ideas and political information but it was not used for campaigning as it should have. Social media gives very good opportunities for two-sided communication but this was not used.

When it comes to the further development of the political campaigning in the Internet, the parties and candidates should think through their strategies of campaigning online. The author of the thesis interviewed parties and there seemed to be some effort made for Internet campaigning but it can be used more efficiently than it was done during the EERE2014 elections. Yet, there were some nicely structured party websites that were clear, had minimum of noise, information was prioritized, photos of the candidates and information about them presented. A few parties also initiated online media stories about campaigning and candidates and spread even more info to the potential voters. Internet ads were done very nicely when compared to other online channels that the parties used for political campaigning. Ads were

focused, contained photos of the candidates, party and campaigning elements and voting numbers. It was very good that there was a “call to action” button for additional information (videos, homepages, e-voting platform etc.). Some parties had professionally designed and textually well-structured media channels. KESK party even tried two-sided communication. Some parties had brand books for the candidates to use as campaign elements (good examples are REFORM and SMDE parties).

It was good that some candidates had professionally designed social media sites that included campaign photos. Facebook political accounts were also created with a focus on campaigning and this is very good way of growing the fan base and the circle of people who learn information about the candidates.

Some parties stated that they have an online strategy, but it seems that at some point, it does not reach the potential voters. Main candidates are supported well by the parties. Parties should have guidelines and general design elements for campaigning that candidates could use in different Internet channels (for example Facebook, Twitter or online newspapers). There should also be a main message or statement that could be used in the news, on Facebook or homepage etc. For example, for the Facebook political accounts of the candidates, the party should provide a professionally designed cover, profile photos and guidelines about what to write in the posts and how to properly link the posts to other channels. It is not important how much information is given out; the quality of information is what is important. There should also be interactive solutions that were missing. Two-sided communication with the potential voters (for example, social media is very good channel for having this) was also much underused. If any news has been created, it should be spread to different online newspapers. Websites should contain information about the priorities and there should be less information with more focus (for example, IRL party had too much info). Some parties should update their websites and follow the current web design trends.

The websites of the candidates need to be updated to follow the current web trends (for example responsiveness, minimalistic design etc.), because most of the pages looked old and not that professional. If one news has been produced for the online media, it should be spread through different newspapers and there should be a link to online news in the social media channels. Candidates should use professional designing in their social media channels and have a communication strategy. Two sided communication opportunities should also be provided in the social media for the potential voters. Social media should contain less text and more multimedia and interactive solutions. If there is a need to provide more text or

information, then there should be a link in the social media (for example, a link to a homepage).

The most important things are providing the potential voter with information and having it well thought through how the information is being presented.

As for further research, the current thesis is good base for a PhD thesis to investigate on how online media fans, published news and campaign costs affect the voting results.

7 Summary

The aim of the current master thesis was to investigate the role of digital media during the 2014 Estonian European Parliament elections and to assess and identify the areas needing improvement for a more effective digital strategy during the elections. Exploratory case study, interviews and literature review were used to reach the goals of the thesis.

The hypotheses of the research were:

- 1) Current e-campaigning is not based on proper online strategy.
- 2) The voters are in the Internet but the parties and candidates do not reach the potential voters.

The questions of this research include:

- 1) What did the typical e-campaigning for Internet voting by parties and candidates look like during the 2014 Estonian European Parliament elections?
- 2) What are the possibilities not being used and what needs to be done differently to gain more success from Internet campaigning?

Selection of samples was made based on which online channels people use the most. The author of the thesis focused on online news, social media (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) homepages/blogs/campaign pages and interviews for getting the required data. Data collecting and interviews were carried out from 1st of March to 25th of May 2014. This period was chosen considering that 3 months remained before the final election day.

During the research and survey it was found that parties have some kind of e-campaigning but there is room for further improvement. It seems that candidates do not take a full advantage of the party strategy and yet, they do not have their own. Candidates are creating content, but it does not reach to potential voters as it should. Parties are mainly supporting the main candidates in the online media, social media and on party websites. Other candidates do not seem to have support from their party that much. Interactivity solutions are missing. Two-sided communication is almost not used at all - only KESK party tried to provide two-sided communication. Ads at online newspapers were nicely done and professionally designed and had a call to action link onto another information source. Social media was not used by the candidates as much as it could have.

As for further research, the current thesis would be a good base for a PhD thesis to investigate on how online media fans, published news and campaigning costs affect the voting results.

8 Summary in Estonian

Pealkiri: E-kampaania Eesti Euroopa Parlamendi 2014 Valimiste Näitel

Märksõnad: e-kampaania, sotsiaalmeedia, kodulehed, blogid, strateegiad, interaktiivsus

Antud magistritöö eesmärgiks oli uurida ja kaardistada poliitilisi e-kampaaniaid, mis leidsid aset 2014 aastal Eesti Euroopa Parlamendi valimistel. Samuti püüdis antud töö välja tuua kampaaniate kitsaskohad ning anda vastavaid soovitusi, kuidas paremate tulemustega jõuda potentsiaalsete valijateni. Eesmärgi saavutamiseks viidi autori poolt läbi kvalitatiivuuring ning intervjuud, mida toetas teoreetiline ülevaade.

Uurimistiku hüpoteesid:

- 1) Poliitilistel e-kampaaniatel ei ole professionaalset e-kampaaniate strateegiat.
- 2) Valijad on Internetis, kuid erakonnad ja kandidaadid ei jõua oma sõnumite ja infoga potentsiaalsete valijateni.

Uuringu küsimused:

- 1) Milline näeb välja tüüpiline e-kampaania erakondade ja kandidaatide poolt Eesti Euroopa Parlamendi 2014 valimiste näitel?
- 2) Mis on kasutamata võimalused ja mida saab teha teisiti, et saavutada suurem edu e-kampaania läbiviimisel?

Lõputöö analüüsis kasutatud andmed koguti ning intervjuud viidi läbi perioodil 01.03. 2014 – 25.05.2014. Selleks jälgiti Internetis kajastatavaid uudiseid, sotsiaalmeediat (Facebook, Twitter ja YouTube) ja erinevate kandidaatide kodulehti/blogisid/kampaania lehti.

Uurimustöö tegi kindlaks, et erakondade poolt loodud esialgsed e-kampaaniate strateegiad on mingil määral olemas, kuid nende täiustamiseks ja parandamiseks on veel küllaldaselt ruumi. Vastukaaluks selgus, et kandidaadid ise ei kasuta eriti erakondade poolt loodud strateegiaid ning samuti pole nad ka endale eraldi strateegiaid välja töötanud. Nad on loonud küll sisu, kuid puuduva strateegia tõttu ei jõua see potentsiaalsete valijateni eesmärgi täitmiseks.

Erakonnad panid põhirõhu vaadeldavates allikates peakandidaatidele, jättes teiste kandidaatide toetamise tagasihoidlikuks. Paljudel poliitilistel e-kampaaniatel on olnud probleemiks, et puudub interaktiivsus – see oli probleemiks ka antud valimistel. Kahepoolset

kommunikatsiooni peaaegu ei kasutatudki – kahepoolset kommunikatsiooni püüdis kasutada ainult Keskerakond sotsiaalmeedias, esitades küsimusi erinevatel teemadel ja oodates potentsiaalsete valijate tagasisidet. Reklaamid erinevates Interneti uudistekanalites ja portaalides olid professionaalselt tehtud – esile tuli hea disain ja valijate võimalus jõuda erakonna poolt määratud lisainfoni. Sotsiaalmeedia oli alakasutatud kandidaatide poolt, kuna puudus kandidaatidel enamasti väljakujunenud konkreetne strateegia, kuidas valija jõuab infoni ning mis infot erinevatel perioodil vastavalt vajadusele luuakse ja presenteeritakse. Antud magistritöö on heaks alustuseks uurimistööle, kuidas ja kas on omavahel seotud edukad valimistulemused ja publitseeritud Interneti uudised, sotsiaalmeedia ning e-kampaaniate maksumus.

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