

Comments on the ECRI report on Estonia

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*Seminar at the University of Turku
3th of May, 2011*

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Recent publications

- ▶ Raivo Vetik & Helemäe Jelena eds., *'The Russian Second Generation in Tallinn and Kohtla-Järve'*, Amsterdam University Press 2011.
- ▶ Vetik, Raivo (2011). Stateless Russians in Estonia. Caroline Sawyer, Brad K. Blitz (eds.). *Statelessness in the European Union: Displaced, Undocumented, Unwanted* (230 - 252). Cambridge University Press.
- ▶ Vetik, R. (2011). Statelessness, citizenship and belonging in Estonia . B. Blitz & M.Lynch (eds). *Statelessness and Citizenship: A Comparative Study on the Benefits of Nationality* (259 - 280). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- ▶ J Kruusvall, R. Vetik ja J. Berry, The strategies of inter-ethnic adaptation of Estonian Russian, in *'Studies in Transition States and Societies'*, vol.1, 2009. pp.3-24.

Mid-term review of the implementation of the integration strategy (integration monitoring 2010)

- ▶ Previous monitorings in 2000, 2002, 2005, 2008.
- ▶ February to April 2010 – preparations for the study in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture.
- ▶ 11th – 24th of May 2010 – polling company Saar Poll interviewed 1010 respondents (half of them russophones) aged 15-74, selected in accordance with the proportional random sample.

Positive trends:

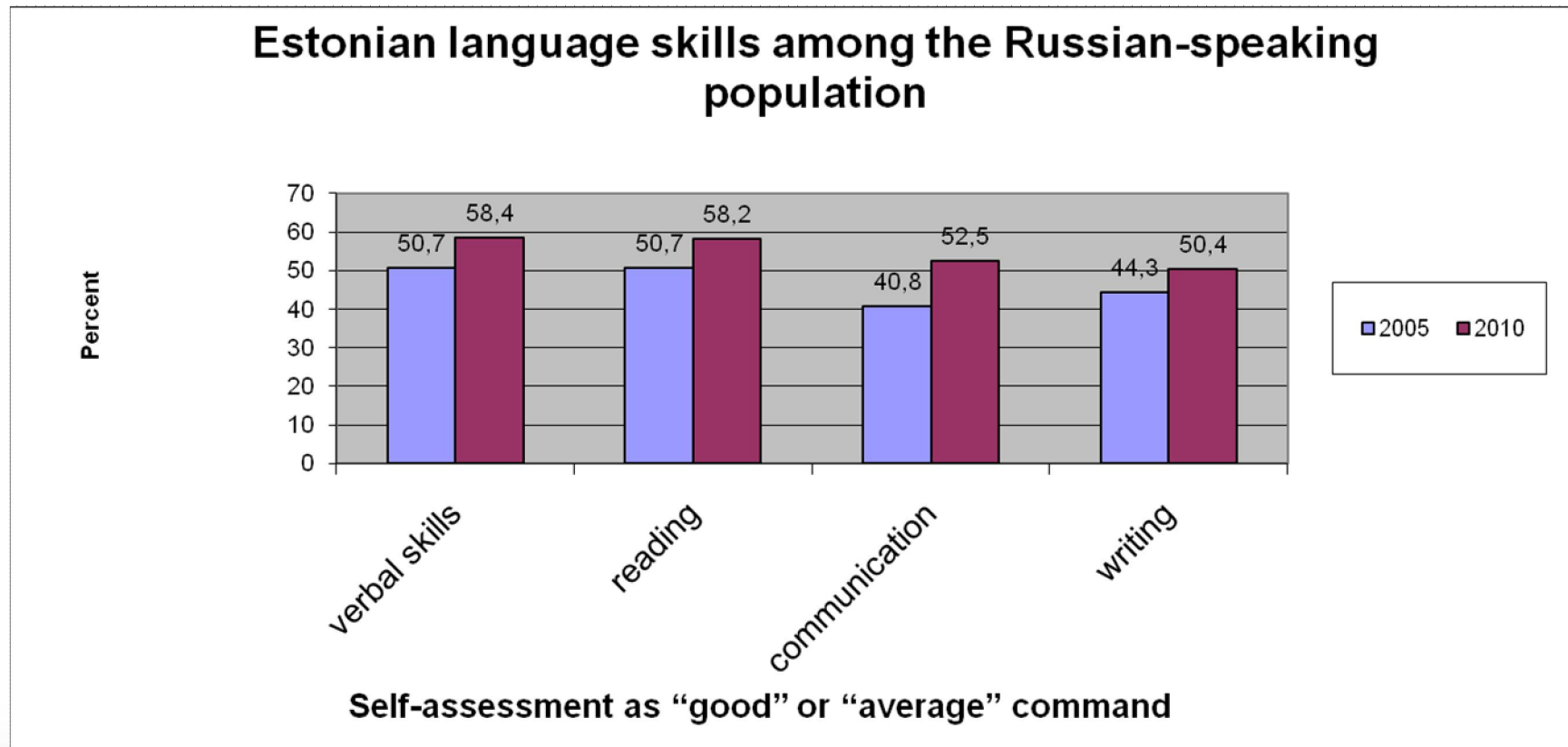
- ▶ The contacts between people of different ethnic background have become somewhat more frequent.
- ▶ Mutual recognition between between people of different ethnic background has grown.
- ▶ The Estonian language skills of the russophone population have improved.

Negative trends:

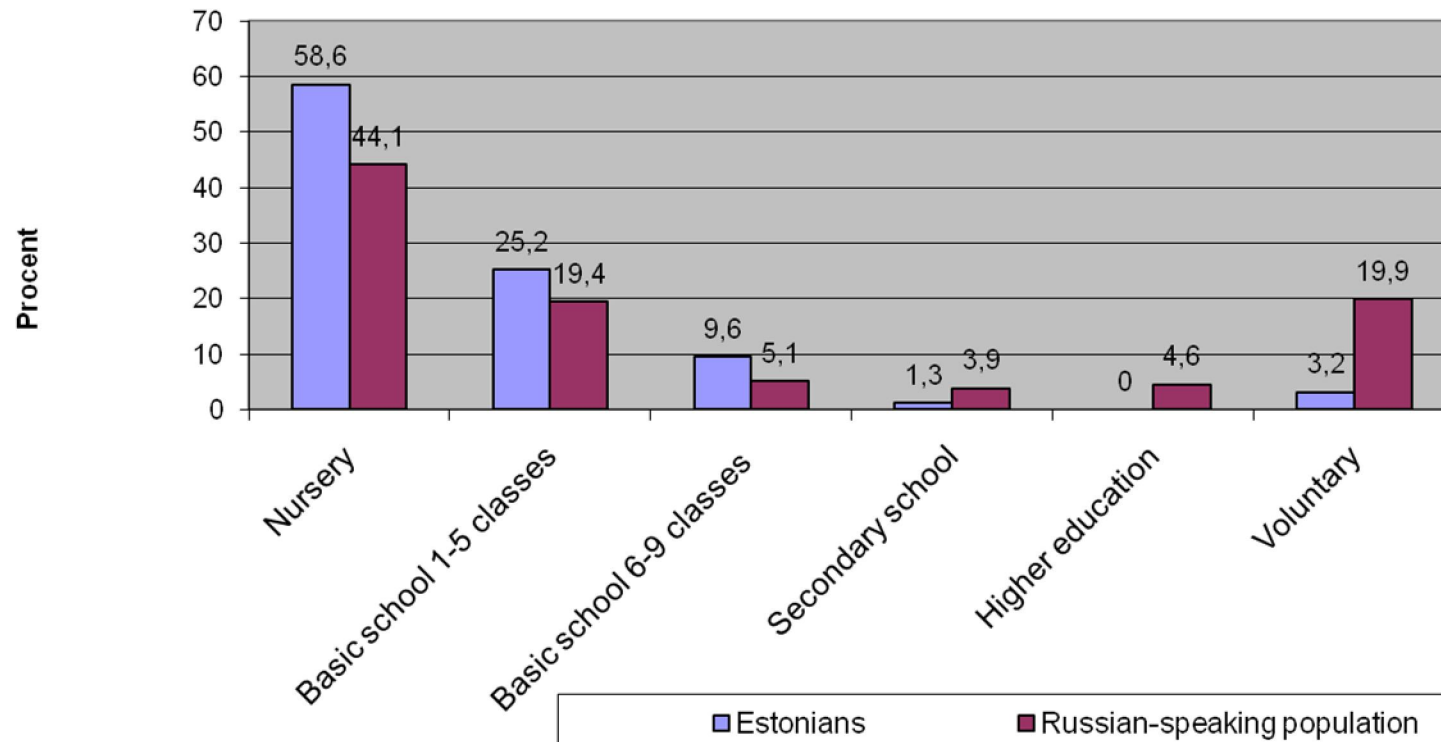
- ▶ The wish to obtain Estonian citizenship has declined significantly among stateless people.
- ▶ Trust in the Estonian state and its institutions is very low among the Russian speaking population.
- ▶ Perception of the socio-economic inequality across ethnic groups has grown.



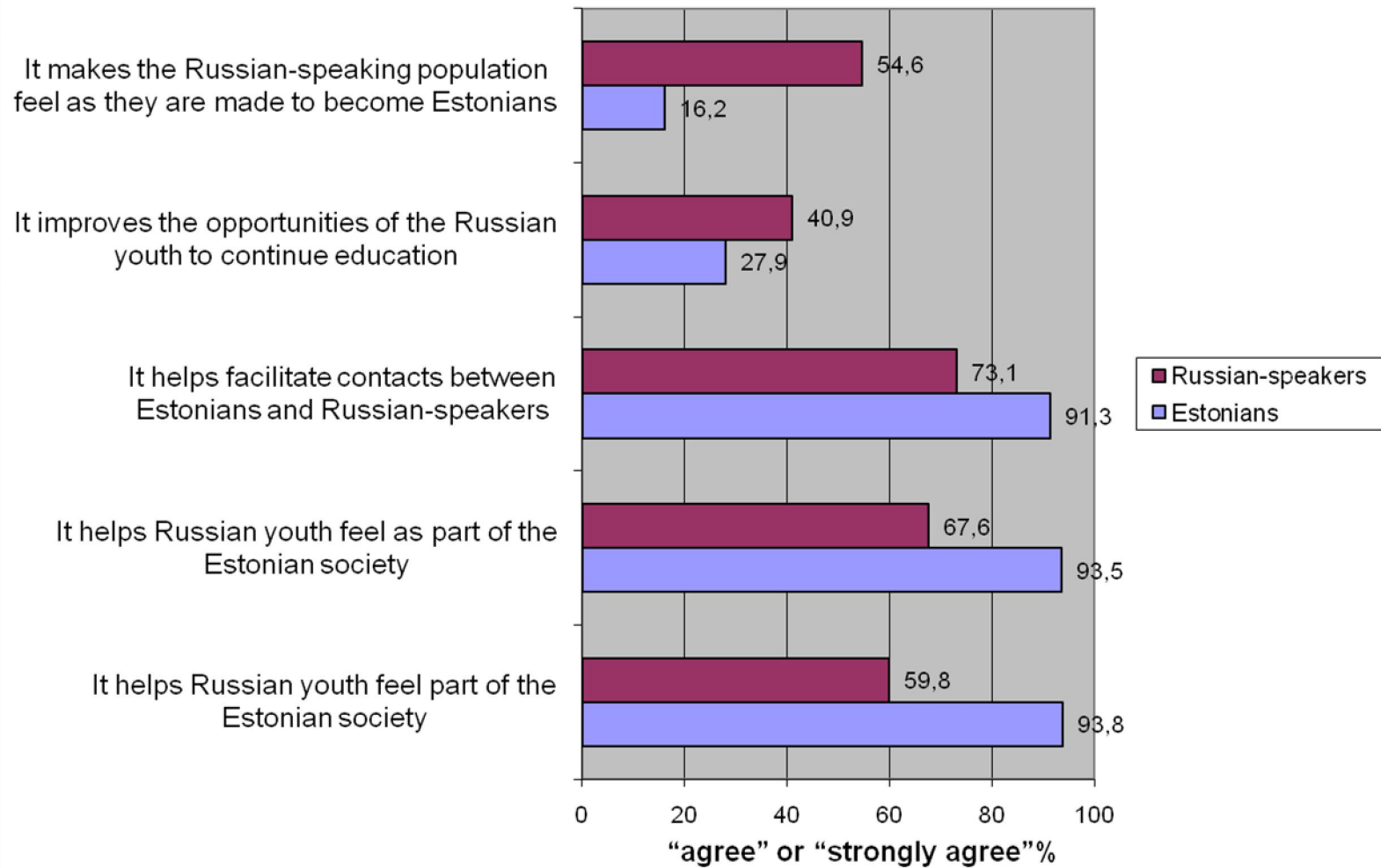
The language issue (para 21-27)



At what level of education should teaching start to be partly in Estonian?



Agreement with statements about learning subjects in Estonian in Russian-speaking schools



Education issue (para 71-90)

- ▶ Educational reform
- ▶ Problematic sequence of the reform
- ▶ Political conflict around the reform
- ▶ Comparison of the Estonian reform to the similar reform in Latvia in 2005

Citizenship issue (para 10-20)

- ▶ In 1992 the proportion of the stateless persons was 32% of the total population, in April 2011 it was about 7% (about 100000 persons).
- ▶ The wish to obtain Estonian citizenship has declined significantly among the stateless during the recent years.

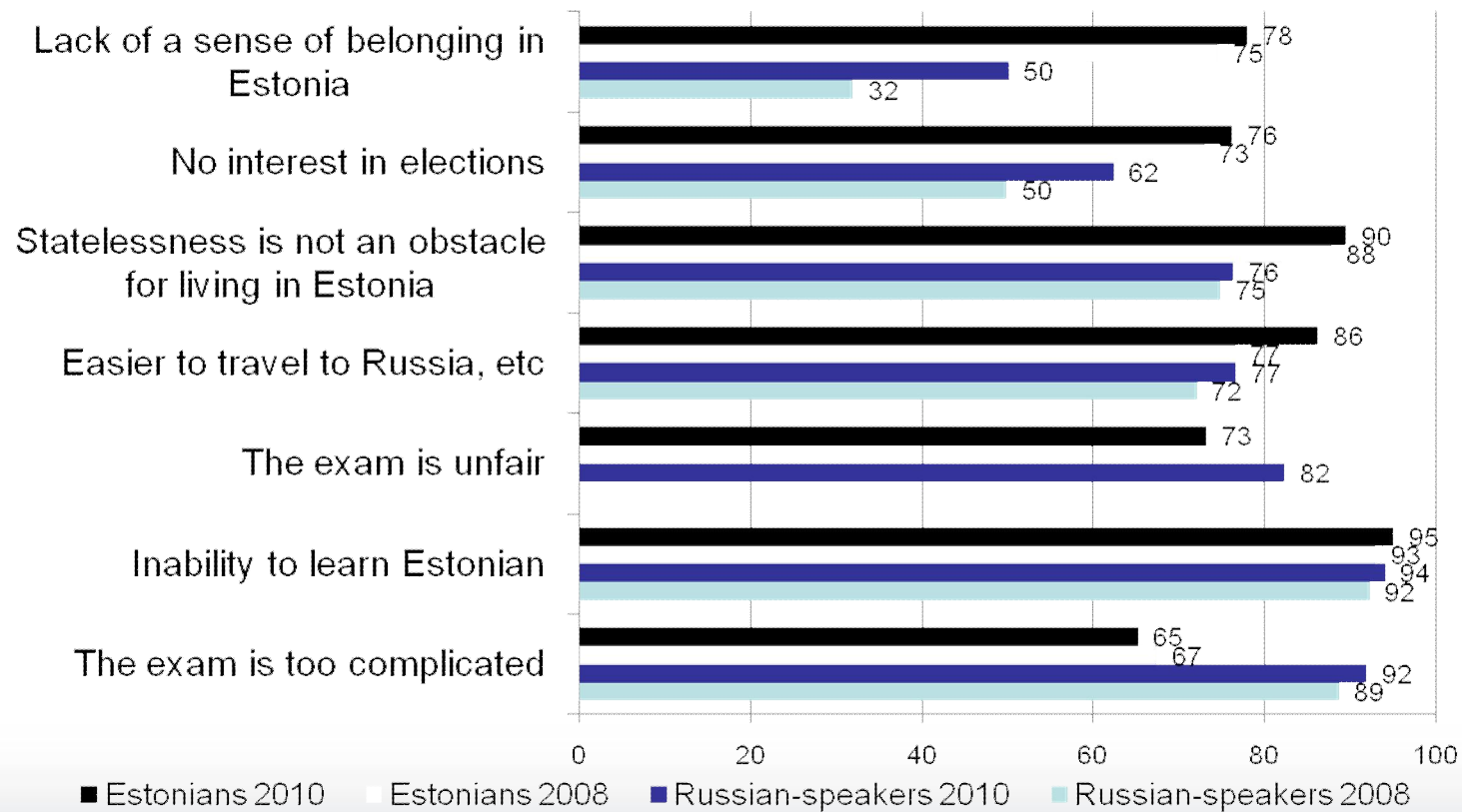
Which citizenship would you like to get?

	2000	2002	2005	2008	2010
Estonian citizenship	60	65	74	51	34
Russian citizenship	5	6	11	19	16
Other citizenship	7	9	5	14	8
No wish to obtain a citizenship	16	14	7	16	40
Number of respondents	170	109	102	105	110

The stateless persons who do not wish to have any citizenship:

- ▶ 61% are over 45 years old.
- ▶ 54% have low Estonian language skills (measured by index)
- ▶ 40% feel a strong or a very strong connection to Estonia
- ▶ 58% feel as a part of the Estonian society,
- ▶ 76% love Estonia
- ▶ 57% feel more at home in Estonia than anywhere else in the world.
- ▶ 92% consider the citizenship policy to be too harsh and unjust to non-Estonians.

Reasons for statelessness

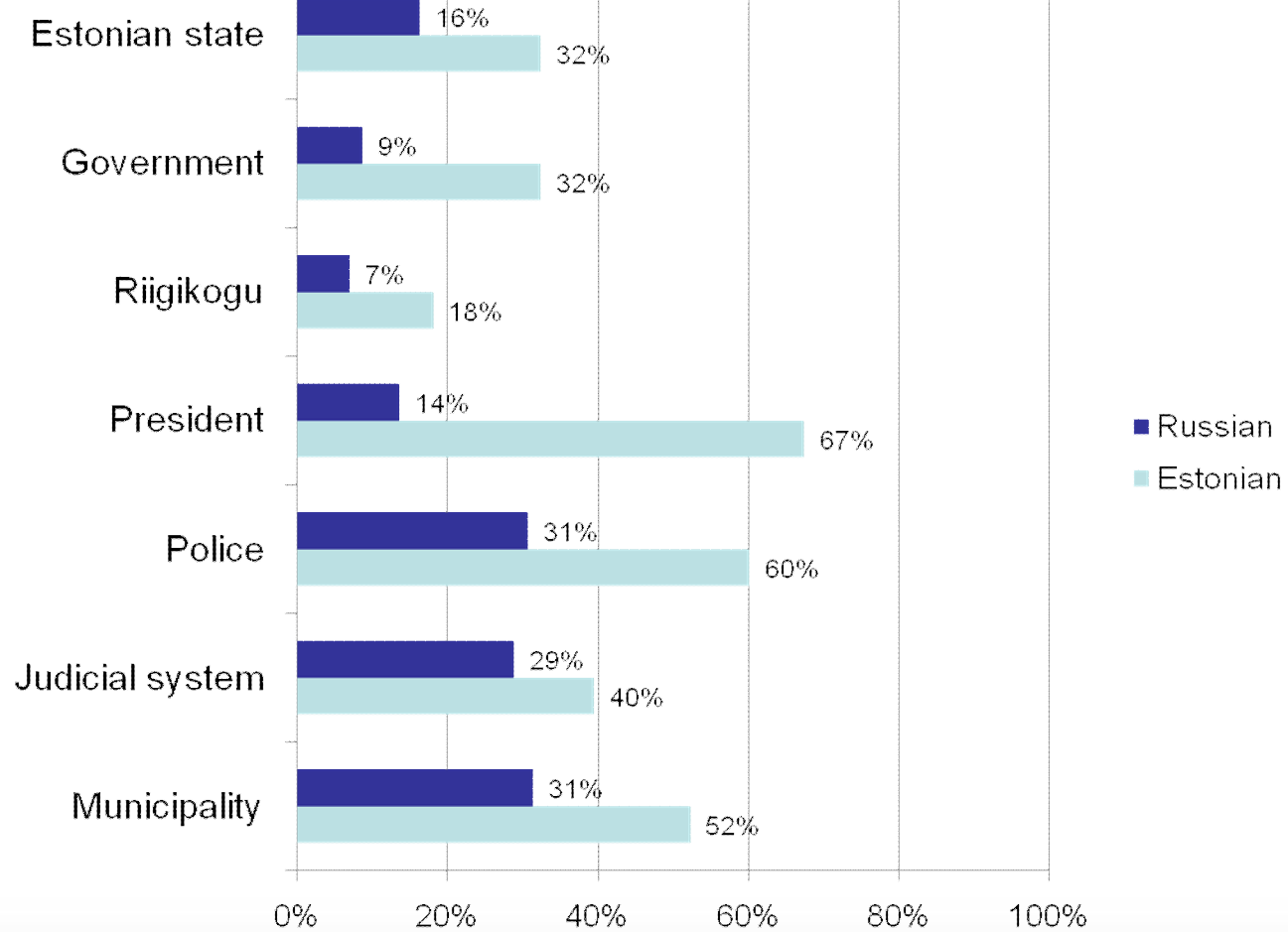


- ▶ Focus group interviews on the motives behind continuing statelessness:
 - a. pragmatic considerations (difficulties with learning the Estonian language, travelling, visa-making, better job opportunities in Europe, Russia, studying etc),
 - b. emotional considerations (having been born and raised in Estonia, feeling of homeland, sense of being offended by being deprived of citizenship etc.)

- ▶ *NR4: I have Russian citizenship. I used to have grey passport, but I had to study. And it is easier to study in Russia, and I took Russian citizenship. But I did not take Estonian, because it was difficult for me to take the exam. I do not understand when they talk ... If it would have been free – I would have gone and learned.*
- ▶ *NR8: I was born here, but I would not be granted citizenship. I should fly a plane ... then I will be given one. Well, I have the Russian one, that's how it went! ... But when they push me against the wall - not a problem, I will change it. Because I was born here. I have nowhere to run, I still live here! And here is my birthland and all the rest. I am comfortable here.*



Trust towards state institutions



Equal opportunities issue

	Favouring Estonians		Equal		Favouring Russian speakers	
	Estonians	Russian speakers	Estonians	Russian speakers	Estonian	Russian speakers
Income, welfare	35%	91%	61%	9%	5%	0%
Educational opportunities for children	36%	80%	63%	20%	1%	0%
Options of political activities	51%	93%	48%	7%	0%	0%
Possibility to attain high positions in public service	63%	95%	37%	4%	0%	1%

The cultural autonomy issue (para 28-30)

- ▶ David Smith: “Cultural Autonomy in Estonia A Relevant Paradigm for the Post-Soviet Era?”, Working Paper 19/01): “Could the inter-war model serve as a means of reconciling the conflicting positions on statehood expressed by titular Estonians and Russian-speakers? On the basis of the evidence presented here, the answer must be a qualified no.

- ▶ In the inter-war period, early debates on minorities were centered upon the status of the economically and politically influential yet numerically small and territorially dispersed German minority. The 1925 law on cultural autonomy, it can be argued, was tailor-made to serve the needs of this group. Today, by contrast, the major question is how to accommodate a large and — above all — territorially compact Russian population.”



The roundtables issue (para 68-70)

- ▶ Presidential Roundtable on National Minorities has been dismissed.
- ▶ There is a new roundtable formed by the Estonian Cooperation Assembly, which is affiliated to the President of Estonia.
- ▶ Comparison of the two roundtables.
- ▶ A new roundtable of minorities affiliated to the Ministry of Culture – internal criticism.

Conclusions

- ▶ ECRI reports play an important role in highlighting the existing problems.
- ▶ However, better communication strategy of the results is needed.
- ▶ Also, a better understanding of the party-political context around certain issues reported is needed.