



Open Government Partnership
Independent Reporting Mechanism
Estonia:
Comments Received on the Third Progress
Report 2016-17

The IRM received the following comment for Commitment 9 from Dr. Kaarel Haav of the Estonian Education Forum:

The action 9 (about participatory democracy and OGP in school education) was initially proposed by Estonian Educational Forum (EEF) and it focused on the system of participatory democracy and OGP in Estonia. The system was introduced in 1990s, but it is not yet reflected in school syllabuses and textbooks. The initial proposal promised to fulfil the gap. It intended to review the studies on civic education and make proposals for introduction of relevant concepts of democracy and public participation into civic syllabuses. Next, the EEF experts promised to prepare relevant learning materials for these new concepts. The proposals were accepted by OGP Estonian round table in May 2016. Next, there was neither openness nor partnership in the following governance of the action 9.

The IRM report doesn't mention it. IRM reporter criticized the action 9 for the lack of clarity on the role of the concepts of open government and civic participation in school syllabi. She also pointed at the limited completion of the action. She considered its political impact as moderate. The reasons of this failure are described below.

Unfortunately, Ms. Mariann Rikka, the chief officer for social studies at the Ministry of Education, rejected the ideas of participatory democracy and removed them from the action. The authors of the proposal, Dr. Kaarel Haav and EEF were excluded from the project. Still, the project went on. The e-Governance Academy conducted activities on digital skills. Ms. Rikka explained later that the actions for social competences would be conducted by a special team for integrating social subjects in school curricula. The team would consist of two teachers and two senior academic researchers. In summer 2017, the names of the academic members were made public. They were not experts in civic syllabuses, textbooks, research and theories. They ignored all critical studies and new theories conducted by Estonian scholars. They completed their framework in April 2018 (not at the end of 2017 as it was scheduled). They relied on a review of mainstream texts on social competence (Ten Dam & Volman, 2007, p. 290). There are

lists of topics on individual, group and social levels. It means that the concepts of man and society, citizen and the state are separated. There was no topic on participatory democracy.

Estonian Educational Forum was established in 1995 as a partnership for all educational stakeholders. Dr. Kaarel Haav has developed the ideology for this Forum. He has defined a complete system of main models of decision making (authoritarian, democratic and partnership). He has elaborated a social scientific system of concepts for civic and citizenship education and used it for analyses of all former civic syllabuses and textbooks in Estonia (1920-2015). He also published a paper about a new social scientific curriculum theory (2015, in Estonian) and sent it to main universities (including Ass. Prof. Kersti Kõiv, head of the ministerial team for social syllabuses) and Ministry of Education (including Ms. Rikka). Ms. Rikka promised that all relevant studies and publications on the topic would be taken into an account and the design of the social subject syllabuses would be open to all experts and stakeholders. So far, this has not happened.