



Eesti Väitlusselts

Estonian Debating Society

Our ways of countering populism

Our mission:

- To promote the unforced force of the better argument

OR

- To promote the use of the force of argument, not the argument of force
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1st priority: youth work

Debate education

- Debate tournaments
 - the President's tournament: <https://www.vaitlus.ee>
 - other sponsored tournaments (Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
 - Non-formal debate education
 - "Argument 2017" and "Argument 2018"
 - Future Leaders specifically targeted
 - youth council or student council activists
 - young people active in youth NGOs
 - etc
 - Course on argumentation, recognising demagoguery
 - Local support
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Argumentation (& other) training for adults

- We are the owners of SpeakSmart: <https://www.speaksmart.ee>
 - A way for good debaters to advance in the Estonian debating community
 - Speaksmart trains:
 - government institutions
 - businesses: <https://www.speaksmart.ee/teenused/avalikud-koolitused/speaking-skills-for-business-professionals>
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Public activities I

- Online debates with critique on argumentation and demagoguery starting from 2008:
<https://arvamus.postimees.ee/4169625/haridus-olgu-eestikeelne-jubalasteaiast-vaitlevad-kristen-michal-ja-yana-toom>
 - Same debates in a TV show format:
<https://arvamus.postimees.ee/3655517/postimehe-vaitlusklubi-eestis-on-pagulaskriisile-ule-reageeritud>
 - Commentaries on public debates (especially election debates):
<https://poliitika.postimees.ee/3107095/vaitlusblogi-debati-voitis-mikser>
 - Column on the public debate in Estonia: <https://arvamus.postimees.ee/3905619/vaitlusseltsi-kolumn-foorumi-debatist-jai-mulje-et-esimesena-petsid-irl-ja-sde>
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Pros & cons

- Fulfilling our mission
 - Earning a reputation
 - good for:
 - funding
 - partnerships
 - overall knowledge about us, including our youth programme
 - bad for:
 - sometimes being viewed as biased
 - Tough to get people to write longer texts on a regular basis
 - Sometimes regrets about
 - being too colorful in the use of language (doubts about neutrality)
 - having to deal with responses in situations when there's no time for it
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Public activities II

Demakook:

- <https://twitter.com/demakook>
- <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:2hzqZ5r12Y0J:demakook.edicypages.com/blogist+&cd=2&hl=et&ct=clnk&gl=ee>

Valimiste valvurid:

- <https://www.facebook.com/heavalimistava/posts/423569041132439>
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Public activities III

Cooperation with ERR, the public broadcaster

- Attempt at a debate TV show (pilot recorded, not picked up)
 - Live commentaries for election debates
 - Other participations in broadcasts: selecting tweets
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Public activities IV

Fact-checking for Delfi:

- <http://www.delfi.ee/news/kov2017/faktikontroll>
 - Modeled on Politifact
 - true, mostly true, half true, mostly false, false, ridiculous
 - Like with Postimees, we do not ask for money
 - independence
 - right to refuse clickbait assignments
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Pros & cons

- Much more readers compared to Postimees
 - Much easier to write one piece (does not need to be long)
 - Difficulties in interpreting whether something is presented as a fact
 - Pressure to publish one piece every day
 - Sometimes regrets over whether the judgement was correct
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