

ESTONIA

Polity5 regime codes:

fac	scode	polity	pers	bmon	bday	byear	emon	eday	eyear	exec	exconst	polcomp
1X	EST	8	1	4	12	1917	2	24	1918	8	7	7
1Oa	EST	-66	1	2	25	1918	6	15	1919	-66	-66	-66
1Ob	EST	10	14	6	16	1919	10	16	1933	8	7	10
1Oc	EST	-88	2	10	17	1933	2	25	1936	-88	-88	-88
1Od	EST	-6	4	2	26	1936	6	16	1940	3	3	2
2X	EST	6	8	9	6	1991	3	6	1999	7	7	6
2Xa	EST	7	1	3	7	1999	3	13	2000	8	7	6
2O	EST	9	19	3	14	2000	99	99	9999	8	7	9

PITF Problem Events: none

2X) Date of Change to Factional-Democratic: September 6, 1991 (independence)

Brief Explanation of Change To:

Estonia gained independence from the Soviet Union on September 6, 1991, and a Constitutional Assembly charged with drafting a new constitution was established on September 7. Estonian voters approved the draft constitution and implementation act, which established a parliamentary system with a president as chief of state and a prime minister to head the government, on June 28, 1992. However, citizenship restrictions resulted in the disenfranchisement of a mainly ethnic-Russian population that had taken up residence during the period of Soviet control. Nationalist fervor quickly dissipated in response to the tensions produced through the introduction of market reforms. Parliamentary elections in March 1995 resulted in a shift back toward social welfare policies and greater competition among constituent groups focused on domestic policy. Inconclusive presidential elections in August 1996, which had required a two-thirds majority vote in parliament, led to the establishment of a broader electoral college in which a simple majority vote would be required to elect a president.

Identify Main Factions:

- *Estonian Nationalists* — Nationalists pursued independence from the Soviet Union and their interests were represented by the Estonian Popular Front and the more extreme Estonian Citizens Committees. While the Estonian Popular Front sought independence through official secession, the Estonian Popular Committees rejected the Soviet system, claiming that the Soviets had illegally occupied and annexed Estonia.
- *Non-Estonian (Russian) minority* — Tensions were heightened between Estonians and Russians during the post-independence period as debate rose over citizenship. In 1991 the Estonian parliament passed a restrictive citizenship law which, in effect, granted citizenship only to those who were citizens of the inter-war republic and their descendants (approximately 60% of the population). By the end of the decade less than 1 million residents (out of 1.5 million) were citizens, resulting in the political disenfranchisement of about one-third of the population (Russians 30%, Ukrainians 3%, Belorussians 2%), who could neither vote nor stand for election.

Changes within Factional Period:

2Xa) March 7, 1999 (parliamentary elections) – In parliamentary elections held on 7 March 1999 the Estonian Centre Party emerged as the largest single party but was subsequently unable to

form a majority coalition. A new government was formed by Mart Laar of the Fatherland Union in coalition with the Moderates' Party and the Estonian Reform Party.

2O) Date of Change from Factional-Autocratic: March 14, 2000 (integration legislation enacted)

Brief Explanation of Change From:

Under pressure from an Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) mission, the Estonia parliament enacted the pro-active Estonian Integration Program (EIP) on 14 March 2000 designed to better integrate Estonia's ethnic minorities and, on 21 November 2001, parliament abolished all language requirements for candidates standing for election. The EIP was renewed in 2007.