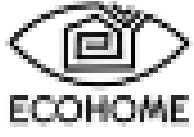


Sufficiency as Climate Action and for Sustainable Lifestyles in Nordic & Baltic Countries and Belarus

Seminar in Tartu, Estonia & ONLINE - April 20, 2026

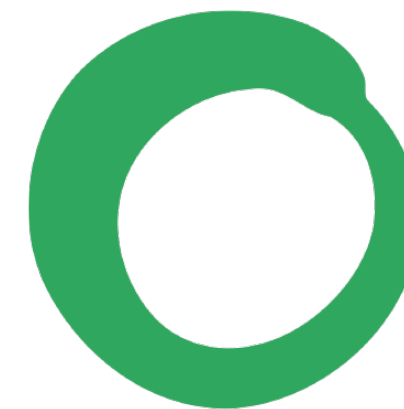
Sufficiency Measures Implemented in Estonia

by Juta Kruusmäe, Estonian Green Movement

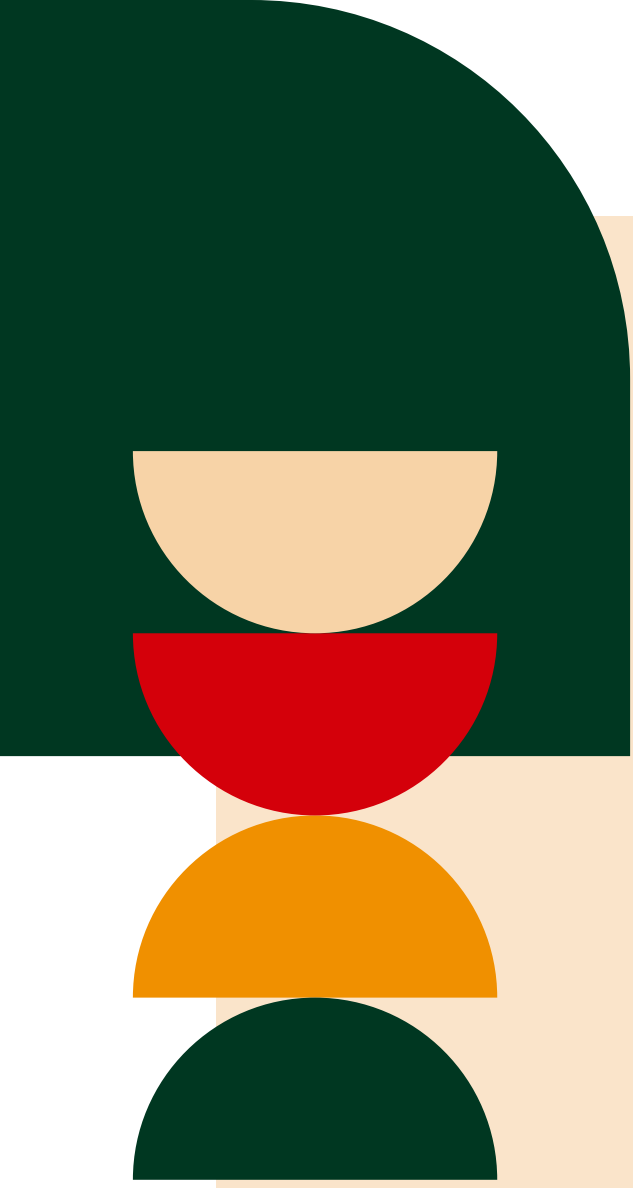


TEAM contribution


Marilin Eessalu
Juta Kruusmäe



**Eesti
Roheline
Liikumine**
Estonian Green Movement-FoE

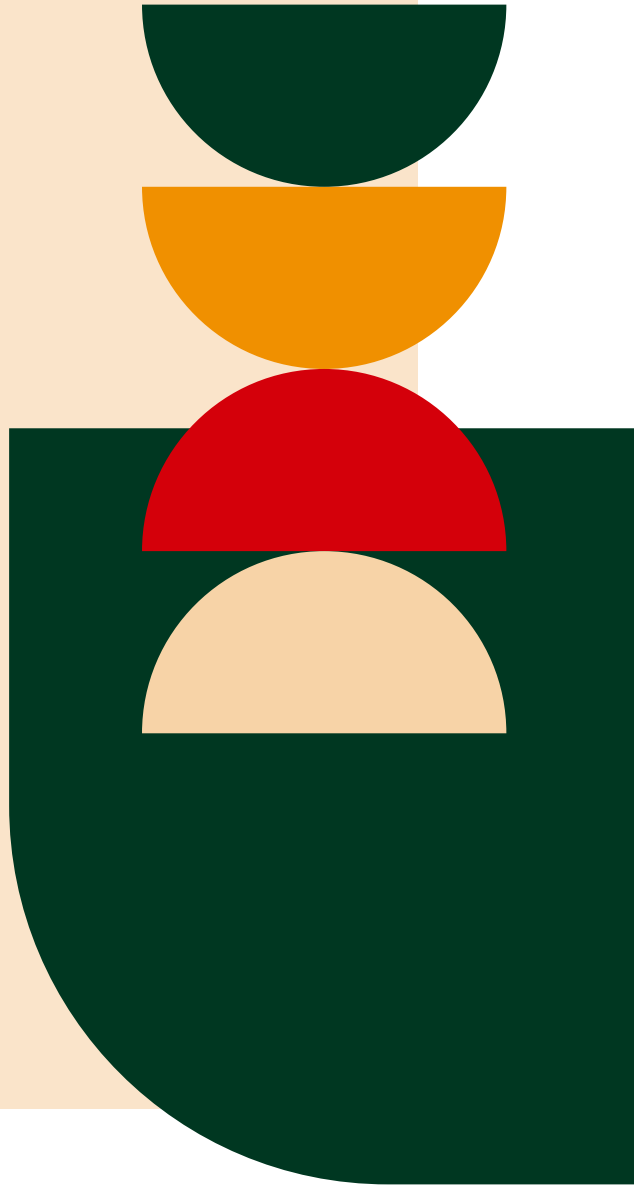


Housing & Buildings #1

- Focus: Policies prioritize **renovating and improving energy efficiency** of existing buildings, rather than reducing housing size. Soviet-era inefficient housing stock → strong sufficiency potential (reduced heating demand)
 - The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications' **tips on how to save energy in homes** in response to the energy crisis in 2022
 - Trend: **more land was developed for fewer people** (Estonia saw one of the highest growth rates in built-up area per capita among OECD countries (2000–2014), despite a 5% population decrease, indicating inefficient land use).
 - **Tiny Houses:** They are available, but are mostly used as summer houses or Airbnb rentals, **not as primary residences.**
- 



Housing & Buildings #2

- Building materials and circular economy, treating waste as a resource: **materials from demolition are reused** or recycled - at least 2 construction and demolition waste sales platforms (*ehitus- ja lammutusjäätmete müügiplatvormid*), e.g., the Sustainable Renovation Information Centre
 - Pay-per-use Model: **renting a mobile sauna** vs building one
 - Slow trend: Estonian residential development is moving **away from asphalt-heavy "concrete parking places"** toward prioritizing high-quality, green living environments that include courtyards, greenery, children's play areas, and community spaces
- 

Mobility

- **Free Public Transport:** Available in Tallinn for residents, students under 19, and seniors over 65. Around Tallinn, municipalities' have introduced **initiatives with reduced train ticket prices to encourage people to use their cars less** for commuting to work in the capital.
- **Motor Vehicle Tax** (since 2025), there are reductions for families with children, lower rates for electric/hybrid/newer cars.
- **Bike-Share**
- **Electric Scooters:** Popular but somewhat problematic in cities.
- There has been a slow shift from dependence on private cars towards shared/collective mobility, but rented cars would not necessarily be full of people and could sometimes just replace public transport.
- **Bike infrastructure:** Varies by city. But "Paint is not infrastructure"




Consumption / Products #1

- **Deposit System:** For beverage packaging, with high recycling rates and some glass reuse.
- **Packaging Tax:** Implemented to reduce waste.
- **Government Comment:** the Ministry of Economy has spoken out **against the overconsumption of low-quality, potentially toxic products from platforms** such as Temu and Shein.
- **Repair Cafes:** Community/NGO-organized (e.g., Tartu Paranduskelder), or Municipality-led: Tallinn Circular Economy Centers have Repair Shops, paid professional repairers and offer mending opportunities for free for citizens.
- Flux of mending events by designers, artists + clothes swaps etc.
- **Circular Economy:** Tartu's roadmap was co-created with citizens. On paper at the moment

Consumption / Products #2

- **Borrowing rather than owning:** At Tallinn's public libraries: the Chest of Musical Instruments ('Pillilaegas') and the Chest of Tools ('Tööriistalaegas'). Tartu Library of Seeds ('Seemneraamatukogu'), the Plants Exchange Box ('Taimvahetuskaapp')
- Some **local recycling centres** and municipal waste stations now operate as, or have partnerships with, reuse & donation centres for **clothing and furniture**. The **Reuse Room (Swap Shops)** offers free stuff to all.
- Yellow stickers indicate Dynamic Perishable Goods Pricing, whereby **prices are reduced for items nearing their expiry date to minimise food waste** (Photo credit: Juta Kruusmäe)
- The “One step at a time” initiative aims to curb **the overconsumption of fast fashion**





Consumption / Products #3

- The Guidelines for events in Tartu in 2022, same in Tallinn in 2023, then 2025 the Estonian National **Guide for Organizing Environmentally Friendly Events** (via the Ministry of Climate available in Estonian, Russian and English) <https://kliimaministeerium.ee/en/estonian-national-guide-organizing-environmentally-friendly-events>
- National policy uptake and systematic impact: in 2023, most **public events** in Tallinn need to serve food and drinks **only in reusable containers and to use only reusable cutlery** (2024 all public events). 2024 similarly in Estonia. This means banning single-use tableware at public events.



Consumption / Products #4

- A free online tool for museums and exhibitors:
Sustainable exhibition model
<https://kestliknaitus.ekm.ee/>
- **Second-hand adoption:** Thrift stores / charity shops / second-hand goods retailers are popular
<https://www.smartposti.ee/en/latest-news/all-news/reuse-gaining-momentum>
- Sharing Platforms: Participating in community sharing of seldom-used items (sell or give away for free)

Energy

- Some offer deals with **dynamic energy pricing**. High electricity bills have prompted many people to use some of their electricity during times of lower demand, and to use apps to track energy prices. Real-time pricing enables households to save money by postponing energy-intensive activities until electricity is cheaper (and cleaner).



Food

- **Meatless Tuesday:** programme in schools
- **Proposal:** the Social Democrats are advocating for a **lower VAT on organic food** (not yet implemented)

#Waste Reduction

- Giving out for free or have dynamic discounts on unwanted or near-expiry food encourage consumers to get/buy what would otherwise be wasted
- Foodsharing Tartu (saves and distributes leftover food, educates, too)

(Photo credit: Juta Kruusmäe)



Food # Waste Reduction

- ResQ Club (Finnish app): bargain prices to reduce waste + social media groups
- Solar-powered food recycling cabinets / food distribution cabinets (sometimes with a refrigerator) for leftover food (*kogukondlik toiduringluskapp*) in different locations, (the community, the municipal government and local entrepreneurs).

Photo credit: <https://rohevald.ee/polvas-avati-esimene-kogukondlik-toiduringluskapp/> #Rohevald = Green County



Work

- **Remote and hybrid work:**
in 2023, 16% of employed persons in Estonia sometimes worked from home, compared to 13.3% in the EU27

The image features a vibrant, abstract graphic design. On the left side, there are several overlapping shapes in shades of orange, red, and dark green. A prominent red wavy banner is positioned horizontally across the middle-left. Below it, there are more complex shapes, including a dark green shape with a yellow-orange cutout. At the bottom, there are horizontal bands of orange, red, and dark green, with some overlapping and curved edges. On the right side, there is a vertical strip with a red and orange gradient. The background is white, and the overall style is modern and colorful.

**and plenty more
initiatives here and
there...**

Thank You



More: roheline.ee roheline.ee/piisavus/

More: Sufficiency as Climate Action Project, presentations and publications:
https://inforse.org/europe/Sufficiency_as_Climate_Action_Project.htm

INFORSE-EUROPE
International Network for Sustainable Energy



Latvijas Zaļā kustība
Latvian Green Movement

