**The Story of Bias: The Ethics behind Estonian Electric Cars Project**

*This article may have some missing facts and information, but most of assumptions are based on author’s personal backstage experience in Estonian politics. Please forgive me in advance for some unethical judgement, but this is an ugly truth.*

According to Kyoto Protocol, which Estonia has ratified in 2002, state has taken an obligation to lower CO2 emissions by 8% by year 2012 in comparison with the year 1990. As a result of economical restructuring followed after collapse of Soviet Union, the whole heavy industry as a legacy of Russian rule was closed down. This led to drastic decrease of CO2 emissions on the territory of Estonian Republic, which meant that after ratification of Kyoto Protocol, Estonia had huge amount of CO2 emissions measured in Assigned Amount Units (AAU) to sell to other states through the Green Investment Scheme (GIS) – which obligates to invest all money received from AAU sale into real reduction of CO2 emissions.

All those investments had weak publicity in local media, until year 2011, when fresh Minister of the Environment, took her office, the need appeared for a positive political self-publicity. This resulted into Electric Cars project, which may sound as a very positive initiative, unless readers learn that the main source for electricity production in Estonia is oil shale:

***In 2002, about 97% of air pollution, 86% of total waste and 23% of water pollution in Estonia came from the power industry, which uses oil shale as the main resource for its power production. (Wikipedia)***

Moreover, electric cars were poorly introduced to the citizens, whose interest in purchasing those, even with governmental subsidies, were insignificant. Due to low interest among fellow-citizens, the decision was taken to provide social workers with these electrical cars. According to Estonian media, preferences to receive cars were given to the social workers from rural areas or small towns, which made almost no sense, if reader considers the conditions of rural roads, low population density, severe climate and, as it was already mentioned, extremely polluting energy source. Worth mentioning, that in the end Tallinn social workers also got some electrical cars, which was much more thoughtful decision, considering the only so far possible benefits of electrical cars in Estonia – the noise and pollution reduction in the city. After the social workers’ initiative did not fulfil its expectations, police became the next electrical cars victim, as I know the result was the same. After almost two years of struggling, the latest update about electrical car use in Estonia comes from a fresh Minister of Social Affairs, who writes in his blog about his positive experience in driving an electrical car in Tallinn (a bit late and primitive, isn’t it).

The only really positive news to mention here, is the promise to cover the whole country with a charging network, which I think will be soon fulfilled.

The question arises, why such a positive and promising initiative has failed in a short run, because lets hope in a long run it will succeed. The quick answer, of course, will be that marketing campaign was poorly performed by ministry at all levels, and the reason is team’s incompetence. But the deeper answer lies in an ethics behind this project.

The green (in terms of experience) Minister of the Environment, who according to EU MP Nigel Farage can be described as a true representative of a new EU political class, who never had a proper job, who married an influential politician, and who fled from dealing with integration because of a fear being criticised, decided to play safe and get lots of positive publicity with, at the first sight, hundred percent winning project, but failed. Why? We can again blame team’s incompetence, but the truth is in motivation. Minister was motivated by getting positive publicity, not by smart implementation of electric cars into society; as a result the focus shifted from important details related to electrical cars’ marketing, which were not taken into account, towards political self-advertising. As an example, we can assume, that electrical cars were first introduced in rural areas instead of capital city, because of political struggle between ruling party and their opponents, who rule in Tallinn.

As a result of this political ambition, which lead to several crucial mistakes, local media created a negative image of this project, which now can have a negative impact on citizens opinion about electric cars.

Source : https://creativesustainabilitymarketing.wordpress.com/2013/03/25/the-history-of-bias-the-ethics-behind-estonian-electric-cars-project/