

REDEFINING E-GOVERNMENT IN THE E-DEMOCRACY CONTEXT: experience of the new Member States

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Résumé

The paper revises the concepts of e-government in view of the broader changes of the democratic governance, focusing on experience of the new EU member states. Paper reviews theoretical models of e-governance, as well as e-government policies and experiences of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. Authors observe that e-governance policies in the new Member States are mostly based on instrumentalist approach to e-government, what raises digital divide and inclusion problems and restricts establishment of e-democracy. Authors propose e-government policy considerations, which are more appropriate for the context of e-democracy in the new Member States.

Introduction

Prominent feature of modern societies is active penetration of ICT into all spheres of social life, especially interactions of citizens-state and other legal and political processes. Both social and technological sciences have been addressing interactions between citizens and state via ICT in the context of knowledge society. Legislators and executive branch of a state are interested in formalization of these interactions. Unfortunately, dominating socio-legal models of e-government, e.g. ICT implementation in state governance in the new EU member states, are laden by many shortcomings and are criticized for ignorance of the social and technological development of the societies¹. One of the reasons of only partial success of ICT implementation is underestimated transformations of traditional legal and political processes; as well as lack of unanimous, coherent perception of legal-political processes in the context of developing knowledge society. Finally, attempts to manage processes undergoing in knowledge society only by technological means, highlight existing and invoke new social resistances – digital divide, which occurs among certain social groups, as well as among state institutions and civil servants. Phenomenon of digital divide complicates development of knowledge society in itself².

In the first part of the paper authors analyze concept of e-government, emphasize interferences between conventional legal-political processes and technologies of knowledge society, and underline holist implementation of e-government rather than technological configurations of public civil services. In the second part, the authors identify principles of holist implementation of e-government based on conclusions of available socio-legal research on e-government. The third part is devoted to empirical analysis of current legal regulation

¹ HEEKS R., (2001), *Reinventing Government in the Information Age. International practice in IT-enabled public sector reform*, p. 33-67, Routledge (London).

HOFF J., HORROCK I., TOPS P. (eds.), (2000), *Democratic Governance and New Technology: Technologically Mediated Innovations in Political Practices in Western Europe*, p. 10-18, ECPR European Politics Series 9, Routledge (London).

² MOLINA A., (2003), *The Digital Divide: A Need for a Global e-Inclusion Movement*, p. 137-152, Technology Analysis and Strategic Management, N° 15-1, Carfax Publishing.

initiatives and prevailing concepts of e-government in selected new EU Member States – Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Poland. The fourth part of the paper emphasizes digital divide aspects of instrumentalist e-government implementations and their impact on e-democracy development. Conclusions substantiate the weaknesses of the dominant instrumentalist approach to e-government, and propose broader holistic concept as more appropriate for the context of e-democracy.

1. Concept of e-government and interaction with legal-political processes

E-government is traditionally perceived as an extension of state governance into cyberspace or realization of state functions by the means of ICT³. E-government is one of the ways to improve quality of communication between society and state, modernize state governance, and successfully administer state reform in accordance with requirements of knowledge society. These reasons set forth that e-government can and should become one of the most important guidelines for knowledge society lawmaking, priority of state strategic policy and factor of governance efficiency.

However, above-mentioned perception of e-government essentially identifies e-government as purely technological form of public services or as technological instrument of implementation of state functions. This is the reason to define this concept of e-government as instrumentalist. Regrettably, instrumentalist concept of e-government is sanctioned in many current legal-political initiatives of e-government in the new EU Member States⁴.

Instrumentalist concept of e-government somewhat deemphasizes significance of e-government to modern society. New technological instruments have potential to influence social welfare; however they are especially vulnerable in terms of conformity with expectations, capabilities, or even emotions of society. The case of non consistency with society development provoke negative outcome – such as digital divide.⁵ Instrumentalist concept of e-government is also incapable to identify variety of possibilities for society which arise from interactions between information technologies and legal-political processes. ICT hold the potential to provide society with new quality of interactions – new e-possibilities, which may be able to solve existing social problems, bring closer state governance to demands of citizens, and widen the scope of conventional democracy. On the other hand, e-government initiatives, which do not correspond with the demands of society, can diminish the potential and advantages of e-government and determine stagnation of social-economic development of knowledge economy and society. Examples of e-divide both in new EU Member States (former Soviet Block) and in the Member States of the EU 15, which have historic traditions of democracy, illustrate negative consequences of inadequate legal-political initiatives of e-government⁶.

Negative examples of e-government implementation may be found in such fields as regulation of electronic signature in Lithuania (Law on electronic signature No VIII-1822 of 11 July 2000), Latvia (Law on electronic documents of 31 October 2002), Poland (Act on electronic signatures of 18 September 2001) and the EU (1999/93/EC Electronic signature directive). Regulation of electronic signature was essentially oriented towards Public Key Infrastructure

³ PRINS J. E. J., (2002), *Designing E-Government. On the Crossroads of Technological Innovation and Institutional Change*, p. 77-85, Kluwer Law International (Hague).

⁴ CHADWICK A., MAY Ch., (2003), *Interaction between States and Citizens in the Age of the Internet: “e-Government” in the United States, Britain, and the European Union*, p. 271-300, Governance: An international Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions, Vol 16, N° 2, Blackwell Publishing. Also cf. below.

⁵ MOLINA A., (2003), *The Digital Divide: A Need for a Global e-Inclusion Movement*, p. 137- 152, Technology Analysis and Strategic Management, N° 15-1, Carfax Publishing.

⁶ *Beyond the digital divide*, (3/13/2004), Economist, Vol 370, Issue 8366.

(PKI), which was impractical and inefficient for practical implementation, especially in smaller countries. Apart from these regulations being practically inactive, they might have had negative impact to the development of e-business and e-services, based on different e-signature infrastructures, also due to controversy and legal uncertainty surrounding the alternative technologies of e-signature. Only the case of Estonia deserves special mention due to 46% of population already using PKI electronic identity cards. These cards are used not only for personal identification, but also provide functions of digital signature⁷.

Non-existence of full-fledged e-procurement systems in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Poland is another example of underdeveloped field of e-government, despite clear emphasis put on e-procurement in eEurope 2005⁸. Current procurement laws in Estonia (Public Procurement Act of 19 October 2000) and Lithuania (Law on Public Procurement No. IX-1217 of 3 December 2002) do not embrace notions of interactive e-procurement and corresponding EU public procurement directives (Directives 2004/17/EC and 2004/18/EC) are still waiting to be transposed in national legal systems. Poland and Latvia have already transposed above mentioned EU public procurement directives in national legal systems, however practical implementation of interactive e-procurement is not present. All four countries have only marginal developments of e-procurement, usually in the form of online information and electronic notification about call for tenders.

Overall, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland as well as other Central and Eastern Europe countries face a number of various e-government initiatives, which are rather uncoordinated⁹. Meanwhile preponderant e-government initiatives in the world treat e-government as interaction between electronic public services and e-participation, that is – inclusion of society into decision making processes. These two aspects of successful e-governance are closely interconnected and have to be implemented in parallel with each other¹⁰.

Due to aforesaid reasons it is very important to include social aspects into the concept of e-government. Social aspects reflect interactions of e-government with conventional legal-political phenomena and with regular processes of democratic state. These dimensions of e-government are reflected in so called holistic approach to e-government. Holistic approach is grounded not only in technological solutions, but also embraces socio-legal mechanisms of e-government. This approach emphasizes legal, political, social, and cultural aspects of e-government and analyzes implementation of e-government in overall context of knowledge society and democracy. Principles of holistic concept are analyzed below.

2. Holistic concept of e-government and its legal-political premises

Implementation of ICT in state governance irrespective of the perception of e-government usually faces certain legal-political barriers. It has been already emphasized that politicians and legislators trying to implement e-government initiatives must always be very careful in evaluating impact of technologies, effects of law and public policy, instead of pushing e-governance as a “advanced” per se. In the latter case not only particular initiative is put at risk, but overall interruption of knowledge society development is possible. Obsolete or inadequate legal regulation, absence of unanimous coordination could signally complicate or

⁷ *eGovernment Factsheet - Estonia - National Infrastructure*, IDABC European eGovernment Services, <http://europa.eu.int/idabc/en/document/1282/391>

⁸ *eEurope 2005: An information society for all*, http://www.europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/2005/all_about/action_plan/index_en.htm

⁹ FOUNTAIN J. E., (2001), *Building the Virtual State: Information Technology and Institutional Change*, p. 23-48, Brookings Institution Press (New York).

¹⁰ PAVLICHEV A., DAVID GARSON G., (2003), *Digital Government: Principles and Best Practices*, p. 112-134, Idea Group Publishing (Washington D.C.).

even suspend development of e-government and e-society, especially considering extraordinary dynamism and complex inter-linkage of e-society processes, which is determined by rapid expansion of ICT.

The main strategic goal of all modern states, irrespective of accepted e-government concept, is to assure that current legal-political system shall be adjusted to realities of knowledge society and oriented towards e-democracy. Instrumentalist e-government initiatives are more likely to fail or gain purely incidental success, because these initiatives propose their solutions on current technological means, which only partly represent demands of knowledge society. Moreover, technological means and solutions used for e-government implementation frequently are obsolete due to hyper-rapid ICT development. All this may result in constantly increasing divide between modern ICT and legal-political processes, instead of tuning them together.

In order to push e-government implementation towards e-democracy it is necessary for state authorities to take clearly proactive steps: support development and activities of e-government, do not hinder or impair private and official initiatives of e-government, disassociate from instrumentalist and obsolescent technological aspects of e-government. Holistic perception of e-government could be one relevant tool towards the existing e-government implementation problems.

Research made on e-government implementation in Lithuania and other Baltic countries show that successful legal reforms and political directives have to be grounded on unanimous and coherent principles, which form the basis of holistic model of e-government¹¹. Integrated holistic approach to e-government is also supported by positive experiences in the EU 15. Such approach is concentrated not on technological solutions, significance whereof for e-democracy is diminishing, but also embrace socio-legal mechanisms of the target environment. It has been already proved that implementation and usage of ICT is not sufficient precondition for strategic advantage of undertaking or organization. Moreover, as it is demonstrated by the recent research, an ICT driven strategic advantages of organizations and even states are rapidly diminishing, allowing leap-frog development. Technological solutions are important for efficient governance, however they have to be fit in with social environment, demands, and expectations¹². Analogous arguments are also presented by currently prevailing “incremental theory” of knowledge society, which emphasizes importance of orientation towards actual sociopolitical-legal architecture of knowledge society, as integral part of any technological initiatives of knowledge society governance. Coherent governance system and main goals of knowledge society could be anticipated only by combining technological solutions with orientation towards holistic architecture of knowledge society¹³. In sum, the principal advantage of the holistic perception of e-government is emphasis on interactions between technological solutions of e-government and sociopolitic- legal architecture of knowledge society.

Some of the background principles of holistic approach are formulated by scientific research on e-government in Lithuania and other countries,¹⁴ also by legal-political directives of

¹¹ *Global Networks and Local Values: A Comparative Look at Germany and the United States*, (2001), p. 24-57, National Academy Press (Washington D.C.).

¹² CARR N. G., (Spring 2003), *IT Doesn't Matter*, p. 23, Harvard Business Review.

¹³ BROWN J. S., HAGEL J., (2003), *Flexible IT, better strategy*, p. 51-59, The McKinsey Quarterly, N° 4.

¹⁴ *WSIS The Bucharest Declaration*, <http://www.wsisromania.ro/menu/home/Documents/declaration.html>
The AIX Declaration on e-Government, <http://falcon.ifs.unilinz.ac.at/news/aixdeclaration.html>

ALABAU A., (2004), *The European Union and its e-Government Development Policy*, Función Vodafone Espana.

countries, preponderant in e-government implementation (e.g. Ireland, Denmark, Canada),¹⁵ as well by the recent documents of European Council – Recommendation Rec(2004)15 on electronic government of 15 December, 2004.¹⁶ In brief, these principles are:

Recognition of fundamental rights and freedoms. Universally accepted rights and freedoms have to be unambiguously extended into electronic environment both with new extensions, which are possible because of the origin of e-government and electronic environment (e.g. maximum accessible internet, free access to electronic information and knowledge, etc.)

Coordinated approach. Legal and political phenomena of knowledge society are integral components of wider, holistic approach to knowledge society and its governance, and have to be analyzed in concert with new ICT instruments.

Minimum regulation. Minimization of self-purposeful regulation and external interference into e-government processes must be one of the fundamental principles of e-government.

Increasing significance of self-regulation and co-regulation. These instruments also support central role of self-regulation in many other fields (for ex., internet content, legality of operations, protection of users, electronic means of public information, etc.)

Technological neutrality and openness (open standards) of governmental initiatives and instrumental processes. Any discrimination or prevention of certain ICTs must not be intolerable.

All user-groups are important – citizens, business, state institutions, minorities (disabled, retired persons, etc.). Any solution must be universally accessible, trustworthy, and indiscriminating.

Transparency and openness are keystones for modern democratic society and its governance.

Accessibility of public information. Public information must be easily accessible. Information is background of well functioning and transparent process of decision making and necessary condition for any democracy. Freely accessible knowledge is fundamental for substantial change both in global society and local communities.

Privacy and data security. E-government is impossible without a respect for citizens' privacy and secure information infrastructure. If this principle is not guaranteed, trust in e-government will never be achieved.

Government and society cooperation. E-government provides society with possibilities to participate in governmental processes. However participation of society in governance must be legally recognized.

Stimulation of universal accessibility at low costs. Development of universal access to the internet is critical component of knowledge strategy and universal accessibility of information. Public access points and public services (such as post, libraries, schools) must provide effective means for stimulation of universal access especially in remote areas and become an important factor for development of these areas.

¹⁵ *Ireland's e-Government*, (2002), New Perspectives, Irish Internet Association, http://newperspectives.ia.ie/e_article000109297.cfm
Danish government issues e-government interoperability framework, (2003), eGovernment Observatory, <http://europa.eu.int/idabc/en/document/1774/333>

¹⁶ Recommendation Rec(2004)15 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on electronic governance (“e-governance”), <https://wcd.coe.int/>

In addition to the above the societal and administrative capabilities are crucial for any success of e-governance, therefore shall be both accounted for and developed along the other aspects of e-governance.

3. Analysis of interactions between e-government and legal-political processes in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Poland

Comprehensive and consistent legal environment of e-government and apropos well coordinated practical implementation of e-government initiatives are two milestones of e-government functionality, since they set forth fundamental principles and ensures practical realization of particular e-government mechanisms¹⁷, especially if principles of holist approach to e-government are set for conceptual background.

Only with few exceptions national e-government implementation in the new EU Member States can be characterized as instrumentalist and lagging behind other countries. Estonia is usually presented as preponderant country in e-government implementation. However, Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland are considerably lagging behind according to many e-government indicators. Table below presents data about e-government on-line availability (Table No. 1) in EU and individual EU countries. According to this data, Estonia is comparable with other countries (Finland, Austria, Sweden, Denmark, United Kingdom, Norway), which have highly developed e-government services. Lithuania is in the middle with such countries as Malta, Portugal, and Slovenia, and slightly lags behind averages of EU 15 and EU 25. Latvia and Poland are in the worst position according to e-government availability.

Table No. 1. E-government on-line availability (percentage)

	2002	2003	2004
EU (25 countries)	---	---	41
EU (15 countries)	36	45	49
Belgium	25	35	35
Czech Republic	---	---	30
Denmark	61	72	58
Germany	35	40	47
Estonia	---	---	63
Greece	32	32	32
Spain	40	40	55
France	35	45	50
Ireland	50	56	50
Italy	35	45	53
Cyprus	---	---	25
Latvia	---	---	5
Lithuania	---	---	40
Luxembourg	5	15	20
Hungary	---	---	15
Malta	---	---	40
Netherlands	21	26	32
Austria	20	68	72
Poland	---	---	10
Portugal	32	37	40
Slovenia	---	---	45
Slovakia	---	---	15

¹⁷ KIŠKIS M., LIMBA T., (2004), *E-valdžios teisinio reglamentavimo prielaidos: Esamų iniciatyvų Lietuvoje analizė*, p. 34-41, Jurisprudencija, N° 57(49), LTU.

Finland	50	61	67
Sweden	67	67	74
United Kingdom	33	50	59
Iceland	28	28	50
Norway	35	47	56

Source: EUROSTAT (The indicator shows the percentage of the 20 basic services which are fully available online.)

All four countries in focus of this paper have adopted significant legislation pertaining to e-government and knowledge society. Yet it is possible to state that legislation and implementation of e-government in Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland is highly instrumental. *Concept of Electronic Government* is the main document defining notion, goals, priorities, and implementation of e-government in Lithuania. This document acknowledges that implementation of ICT and e-governance determines fundamental changes in state political, legal, and social life. However, it is rather evident, that the regulations, irrespective of initial statements about wider perception of e-government, are oriented towards the technological forms of public services. Concept of e-government is rather narrow and sets only guidelines for provision of electronic public services. Scientific research on quality of e-services and interactions between government and citizens conclude that quality of e-services and effectiveness of interactions in Lithuania are lagging behind the formal initiatives¹⁸. Also e-government is not perceived as part of wider concept of e-democracy, which is missing electronic participation of citizens in state decision making and other social issues¹⁹. Conceptual background of Latvia's e-government development is established by *Latvia's e-Government Conception*. Among main goals of this document is cheaper, better and more democratic government. E-democracy goal and society participation are underlined besides improvement and modernization of public administration in *e-Government Concpetion*. Thus Latvia comes closer to the holist and socially backed perception of e-government. However, data in Table No. 1 shows that conceptual framework is not enough for successful operation of e-government, as Latvia appears in the bottom line according the availability of e-government services. Poland's conceptual framework of e-government is relatively comprehensive and up-to-dated. Main document is *ePoland – The Strategy on the Development of the Information Society in Poland for the years 2004-2006*. This strategy embraces key issues of e-government, accessible internet, e-health, e-learning, and other spheres of overall information society. However, there is clear emphasis on technological solutions of information society in ePoland strategy. Issues of e-democracy and wider participation of society in state administration are not elaborated. Practical implementation of e-government in Poland is also lackluster.

Estonia belongs to countries with relatively well developed e-government and advanced information society in the context of EU 25. Estonia is first according e-government rankings among Central and Eastern Europe countries²⁰. This data is presented in Diagram No. 1.

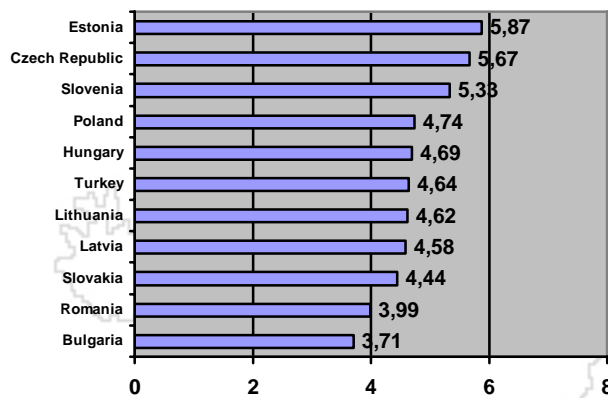
¹⁸ AUGUSTINAITIS A., PETRAUSKAS R., (2002), *The First Steps of E-Governance in Lithuania: from Theory to Practice*, p. 438-445, Electronic government. Proceedings of First International conference EGOV2002, ISBN 3-540-44121-2, Springer -Verlag (Berlin).

PETRAUSKAS R., LIMBA T., (2002), *Quality of communication by Internet between citizens and Governance*, p. 104-118, BALTIC IT&T 2002 FORUM: eBALTICS: Towards Effective Public-Private Partnership (Riga).

¹⁹ BRACK A., NOBLE P., (Summer 2001), *E-democracy Around the World: A Survey for the Bertelsmann Foundation*, <http://www.begix.de/en/hintergrund/noble.html>

²⁰ IT in Public Administration of Estonia, YEARBOOK 2004, <http://www.riso.ee/en/it2004en/>

Diagram No. 1. Central Europe e-government rankings (scale 1-10)



Source: Economist Intelligence Unit

Estonian state e-government policy and main conceptual documents are also evaluated as very well designed and comprehensive²¹. Legal framework embraces not only technical infrastructure and e-services, but also provisions for e-democracy and e-participation of citizens in state administration. Practical implementation also is one of the most successful in the context of other European countries. As it was stated above, Estonia is smoothly introducing electronic personal identity cards, developing e-signature infrastructure. There are also well developed projects of society participation by electronic means in state administration (e-democracy website “Today I decide”, <http://tom.riik.ee/>; eElections project). Based on the above, it is possible to conclude that Estonian legal framework and practical implementation is more holistic than other countries in focus in this paper. However, there is still more to be done in Estonia, especially in stimulating public usage of e-government and e-democracy services. As it is seen from data in Table No. 2 Estonia is not among preponderant countries according to e-government usage by individuals.

Table No. 2. E-government usage by individuals (percentage)

	2002	2003	2004
Czech Republic	---	---	7
Denmark	37	40	44
Germany	17	26	33
Estonia	---	---	20
Greece	---	---	8
Ireland	---	---	14
Cyprus	---	---	11
Latvia	---	---	13
Lithuania	---	7	10
Luxembourg	16	28	45
Hungary	---	---	16
Austria	11	20	21
Poland	---	---	13
Portugal	---	---	13
Slovenia	---	---	13
Slovakia	---	---	25
Finland	34	40	45
Sweden	42	44	39
United Kingdom	---	21	22

²¹ IBID.

Bulgaria	---	---	5
Turkey	---	---	6
Iceland	---	56	58
Norway	---	43	37

Source: EUROSTAT

Above mentioned empiric observations and existing research data unambiguously infer that instrumentalist perception of e-government prevails in Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland, i.e. that e-government is associated with partial transfer of public services into cyberspace and technologization thereof. Society is more and more integrating cyberspace into daily life, therefore it is extremely important not only to improve existing legal framework, but also to change overall e-government perception, implement coherent legal-political mechanisms, develop capabilities of government and society to take advantage of the ICT. In respect of the latter, Estonia is in a better position, nevertheless it still falls behind the e-democracy objectives.

4. Digital divide in the e-democracy context

Digital divide is commonly defined as an impact of ICT implementation on processes of social cohesion. Digital divide appears when new disadvantaged society groups are formed. These groups usually have no or very marginal possibilities to participate in public life by using information technologies. It has to be mentioned, that digital divide can also influence already existing disadvantaged society groups. Traditionally such groups are undereducated people, women, seniors, disabled, national and other minorities. These groups face difficulties when integrating in social and political life. Challenges of e-government can reinforce existing problems of social divide and prevent them from participating in the knowledge society²².

In addition to the above, digital divide may emerge due to lack of capabilities and misrepresentation of interests of the different social groups, civil servants or whole public institutions. Development of e-government in Central and Eastern Europe face relatively weak civil society and lack of experience, administration skills, and competence of responsible state institutions. These factors contribute to the digital divide, where creation of e-government remains only on the level of declarations and speculative political goals. Another problem, which blocks effective functioning of e-government, is uneven implementation of ICT in processes of state administration and everyday life of society. Low level of internet accessibility divides society, as some social groups have more possibilities to use e-government services and participate in knowledge society than others.

Problems of digital divide, success of e-government and advance of e-democracy are closely interrelated. Digital divide appears as one of the main barriers for successful functioning of e-government, which blocks particular social groups (not necessarily traditionally excluded) and social institutions from participating in cultural, economic, politic, and legal life of a knowledge society. In order to achieve sustainable development of e-democracy and e-society, problems of digital divide must be addressed in all measures orientated towards e-democracy – including e-government as e-democracy governance measure.

Digital divide is side effect of almost all e-processes and it extends together with cyberspace. Despite ambitious goals of many current e-government initiatives, implementation of ICT in state governance not always resulted in elimination of existing social differences between

²² MOLINA A., (2003), *The Digital Divide: A Need for a Global e-Inclusion Movement*, p. 137-152, Technology Analysis and Strategic Management, N° 15-1, Carfax Publishing.

various society groups, but also created new ones. Based on analysis made in this paper, e-government initiatives in Lithuania emphasize technological solutions and do not consider actual consequences and interactions with conventional societal processes. Such dissonance between current e-government initiatives and realities of societal processes contributes to digital divide and encourages new social differentiations, irresponsibility of e-government processes to society, insularity and other negative phenomena.

Accounting for digital divide has to become one of the most important tasks of knowledge society and e-government. Unfortunately, instrumentalist approach to e-government is predisposed to underestimate problems of digital divide²³, as it is demonstrated by the above reviewed data on Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and even Estonia. Only holist model of e-governance, which puts more emphasis on the societal issues and challenges of digital divide, also emphasizes interactions of e-government with conventional societal processes may be proposed as more compatible with the goals of e-democracy. Prominent elements of the holistic approach help advance Estonia as the most advanced e-governance country among the target group. Holistic approach has to be considered and put forward in the e-government legislation as one of the tools for e-government and e-democracy.

5. Conclusions

Analysis made by authors reveals that instrumentalist approach to e-government based on technological means prevails in practical e-government initiatives and legislation in Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland. Estonia is a step closer to holist model of e-government and hence boosts the most successful e-government implementation. Conducted analysis also allows identifying shortcomings of instrumentalist approach. Instrumentalist approach capitalizes on technological instruments rather than societal capabilities and actual state of needs. Although any e-government initiatives are positive, however they may be insufficient and inadequate with demands of actual rapid development of knowledge society, resulting in failure to solve problems of digital divide. Digital divide eventually may have critical impact on success of any e-government initiatives, especially bearing in mind acceleration of society development and e-democracy context. Orientation towards coherent social model of e-government based on holistic principles is very important condition for successful e-government regulation, setting goals of e-democracy and capitalizing on solving digital divide. Legislators and politicians need to consider shortcomings and alternatives to dominant instrumentalist model of e-governance, while choosing particular means for creating of e-democracy both in the new EU 25.

²³ CECCHINI S., SCOTT Ch., (2003), *Can information and communications technology applications contribute to poverty reduction?*, p. 73-84, Information Technology for Development, Vol 10, Issue 2.