

Summaries in English

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S COLUMN

Only the one who speaks is heard!

Helle Ruusing Editor-in-chief of *Riigikogu Toimetised*, Chancellery of the Riigikogu Press and Information Department information adviser

In the last fifteen years, Estonian society has achieved an extraordinary amount economically and politically. We have made progress at a rapid rate and learned to solve problems in a flexible manner. Lately, however, we have started to ask ourselves: *quo vadis*, what is our next big goal? What is our identity? Now is the time to think more leisurely on planned changes and systematically look at the effect of the changes – then there is hope that the necessary changes will lead to the desired results. And the people themselves must want to participate actively in the process of policy formation. Going to the polls once every four years is not enough.

The 11th edition of the journal contains articles from the field of educational policy, developing civic society and social, taxation and agricultural policy. Here the reader will find philosophy professor Margit Sutrop's essay, "Does Estonia share European values?", treatments of European Parliament and the ethos of a Citizens' Europe, and much more that pertains to society and politics. Also in this issue: the leaders of the national delegations to the Baltic Assembly discuss the future of Baltic cooperation. *Riigikogu Toimetised* aspires to be a forum for topics that are important to our society.

ESSAY

Does Estonia share European values?

Margit Sutrop, University of Tartu professor of practical philosophy, head of the Centre for Ethics

The basic question raised in this article is what are the common values that unite the 25 peoples and 455 million people that constitute Europe. The further question is whether or not Estonia belongs to a European value-space. First, it is pointed out that there is considerable diversity of opinion with regard to those values deemed fundamental for the European identity. To demonstrate this, two diametrically opposing views are compared. Recently consecrated Pope Benedictus XVI believes that the shattering of moral values, multiculturalism, and secularism have caused decline of Europe. In his book „The European Dream“ (2004) American economist and essayist Jeremy Rifkin claims that Europe is looking to the future, and will put into effect those ideals that Americans have not even dared to dream about. Rifkin shows how European ideals differ from the American ones, based on contrasting understandings of freedom and security. In this article, it is claimed that Rifkin's differentiation between American and European values can also be regarded as an opposition between liberal and communitarian values. According to liberal individualism, the individual is more important than the society in which he or she lives. Communitarianism gives society greater weight than to the individual. Upon closer examination, it becomes clear that Europe's new identity is founded on communitarian values, just as American values are a mixture of liberal and communitarian ones, since for Americans, a sense of connectedness to multiple social groupings is crucial. Europe is differentiated from America in the value it places on the diversity and multiplicity of cultures. At the same time there is a conscious attempt to avoid an ethnocentric mentality, one that would view one's own people in a positive light, and others negatively. The European Union was born of the intention to avoid ethnic conflict and guarantee peace. Tolerance, respect for human dignity, and solidarity are at the core of the new European identity. Estonian identity, however, is based on an ethnocentric narrative, which represents us in the role of a victim and leaves blame and responsibility in the hands of others. Since we support the conservative model of a nation-state, our patriotism closely resembles the sentiments of Americans, who loudly proclaim love for their own people and set themselves in opposition to an „evil empire.“ In many other respects Estonian values approximate American more closely than the European ones: economic growth weighs more than the quality of life and self-sustaining development; strong assent is given to the work ethic and the use of military force. This article suggests that although at first glance Estonian values might seem more American than European, Estonia lacks a mechanism for balancing individualistic values through religion and the will to participate in collective endeavours. Estonia's allegiance belongs to individualistic values, and this in turn renders doubtful Estonia's belonging to a European value-space.

POLITICAL FORUM

Baltic cooperation

The Baltic Assembly on the road to big changes

Andres Taimla, member of the Riigikogu, Estonian Reform Party; president of the Baltic Assembly, leader of the Estonian delegation

The Estonian delegation has been consistent in its calls for the Baltic Assembly to be reformed, since we feel it has been too self-absorbed. Among other things, we do not feel that it is right that an entire quarter of the Baltic Assembly budget goes to cover secretariat costs. Estonia's desire was and is to make the work of the Baltic Assembly more effective, flexible and concrete. The Assembly should focus more on resolving foreign policy issues while not ruling out dealing with problems of domestic life. The Baltic Assembly should organize its work so that it is not just politicians meeting but a place for foreign policy planning and resolving interstate problems. The Estonian delegation desires to continue negotiations on the topic of how to increase the responsibility level of delegations, especially when they are currently fulfilling the important role of president. We propose that the work of the secretariat be rotated so that the president would assume the obligation of organizing the work of the secretariat as well.

The Baltic Assembly must become more pragmatic

Aigars Petersons, vice-president of the Baltic Assembly, leader of the Latvian delegation

In the current complicated international situation, the cooperation of the Baltic States must become more pragmatic and flexible. The Baltic Assembly must continue structural and political reforms in the new international situation. The Latvian delegation has always believed that cooperation with the Nordic Council and the Benelux Interparliamentary Consultative Council would be a solid platform on which the Baltic Assembly could standardize its agenda, identify and resolve problems, and share positions, experiences and information between the Baltic States, the Nordic countries and the Benelux states. This model of interparliamentary cooperation allows misunderstandings to be avoided in regard to possible activity plans and positions, and favors exchange of experience. We must continue the discussions we have started in order to create a more active dialogue with other European regional organizations, including the regional bodies of the Mediterranean region.

The future cooperation of the Baltic states from the perspective of the Baltic Assembly

Valerijus Simulik, vice-president of the Baltic Assembly, leader of the Lithuanian delegation

Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia are three rapidly developing countries in the Baltic Sea region: partners not connected so much by historical experience but by aims, ambitions and hopes for the future. The activity of the Baltic Assembly to date demonstrates the uniqueness of political relations in this region. The coordinated policy of the Baltic States has allowed and continues to allow their aims to be presented to the rest of the world as the common and definite position of the Baltic States. The Baltic Assembly has reached maturity and is currently regarded as not only an advisory body, but an active and effectively functional organization. Now that the Baltic States are members of the European Union and NATO, the Baltic Assembly is considering the need to expand trilateral cooperation into other regions, using the "3+" form of cooperation. One example is the cooperation with the countries of the Balkans and the southern Caucasus.

Above all, cooperation between the three Baltic States means supporting each other in a dynamically developing Europe.

Educational policy

Education reforms in Estonia

Mailis Reps, Minister of Education and Research, Estonian Centre Party

Dissatisfaction with the state of education and social welfare in Estonia has reached a critical point. Along with social inequality, educational stratification is also spreading, creating fertile ground for inequality to develop further and for society to become alienated. Innovative ideas in education to this point have mainly been limited to the reallocation of funds, and there has been no agreement on intrinsic changes. We cannot go on like this, because the unequal level of general education and the fact that modernization of schools is going in several directions at once has led to considerable internal migration of students (and often parents). Since the principle of one standard school is still in effect in Estonia, a quality general education must be ensured throughout the entire country, which naturally requires there to be standardized and concrete curricula and consultation, supervision and state examinations on a corresponding level.

The educational strategy process in Estonia and the Estonian Educational Forum

Olav Aarna, chairman of the Riigikogu's Cultural Affairs Committee, Union for the Republic – Res Publica

The Estonian Educational Forum founded in Tartu in 1995 arose out of the need to involve all possible interest groups in the making of major educational policy decisions, or to put it another way, to develop, in the field of educational policy, the participatory democracy that is inherent to civic society. From the very outset, the forum has looked for ways to avoid sudden changes in direction in educational policy – the kind of shifts that follow changes in the composition of the Riigikogu and the Government of the Republic and the appointment of new educational ministers. For the educational forum, an important measure in achieving this goal was the passage of the Estonian educational system conception in the Riigikogu. Even though no one, in the whole time the educational forum has been active, has questioned the need for a development plan, we must note with regret that for several reasons, we still have no state-adopted document entitled “educational strategy.” Despite the setbacks, the educational forum has had a significant impact on the development of the educational strategy process in Estonia and has contributed to the development of the culture of participation and involvement in Estonia.

Thoughts on developments in educational life from 1990–2005

Martin Kaasik, director of the Tallinn Laagna Gymnasium, chairman of the management board of the Estonian Association of School Administrators

If we think back on the last fifteen years of educational development, there was never as creative or interesting a period as the beginning of the 1990s, nor will there be again. The fact that new textbooks had not been introduced and it wasn't appropriate to continue Soviet-era instruction in many subjects meant that every teacher had to be resourceful. Children also adopted an unprecedented positive attitude to learning, and, like adults, believed that, with hard work, they would be able to rebuild our country. During this period, invaluable assistance for creating democratic schools came from abroad. The closest communication was with Finnish colleagues, but training and material aid was also offered by other European states, the US and Canada. Currently, progress in the educational sphere is hindered most by the lack of a consistent policy. Every time a new Minister of Education and Research takes office, he starts by reconsidering and redoing what his predecessor did, rather than continuing where the forerunner left off.

The Estonian university in an open Europe. White room forum

Siiri Sillajõe, Chancellery of the Riigikogu, deputy head of the Economic and Social Information Department, adviser

The Riigikogu's European Union affairs committee has initiated dialogue with the public at the parliamentary level on future strategies and development scenarios for the Estonian state and society. The white room forum (<http://www.riigikogu.ee/foorum>) consists of two parts: a round-table session and an Internet forum. The topic of the first forum concerned Estonian universities' role in an open Europe. In position papers sent to the forum for discussion, representatives from Estonia's universities described the situation regarding higher education and presented their vision of the future. At the public session held in the White Room on 22 April 2005, there was more thorough talk about higher educational funding, domestic competition and the ability of higher education to be internationally competitive. The politicians and representatives from universities who took part in the discussion found that cooperation, rather than competition, between universities was becoming more and more

important; and that the key issue for continued development was the existence of a national higher educational strategy.

The conception of the development of Estonian civic society

A support group is for support or the painted wall, golden key and real life

Avo Üprus, member of the Riigikogu, Union for the Republic – Res Publica

So that the Estonian civic society development conception (EKAK) and the implementation plan would not be just a pretty picture adorning the wall, an EKAK support group was founded in February 2004 in the Riigikogu. The 25 deputies in the support group have sounded a vote across party lines in favor of civic society. The efficiency of the Estonian economy, the social and moral capacity of society and the common weal are not increased so much by the tightness and alignment of the field of competition but by the field of *cooperation*. The success of Estonia is in that cooperation, and the key to that box is in our hands. Maybe it will turn out to be a golden key which will lead the way to the reality behind those pictures on the wall, overcoming alienation and achieving a new quality for civic society through the participation of the people.

Civic society is not born overnight

Jaan Õunapuu, Minister of Regional Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Estonian People's Union

In order to implement the principles of the vision of the development of Estonian civic society approved by the Riigikogu in December 2002, a joint commission of representatives of government and civic bodies was convoked in October 2003 at the behest of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The goal was to find the best solutions for supporting the growth of civic society and eliminating any obstacles that have formed. This year from August to October, seminars will be organized in all of Estonia's counties to introduce the joint commission's activities, findings and proposals and ensure a wider discussion of the topics. The ideas and proposals of participants will be considered in the future work of the commission of ministry and civic association representatives. It will be important to ensure constructive cooperation between a joint commission and the EKAK support group. The task of the commission is to find the most suitable solutions, while the contribution of the support group might be to marshal political support for the proposals produced in cooperation.

CONSTITUTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

European Parliament

The glory and poverty of European Parliament

Eiki Berg, University of Tartu professor ordinarius of theory of international relations

Just as the European Union is not a union, neither is the European Parliament the pan-European equivalent of, or substitute for, national assemblies. Even though the image of the legislature is not considered very good for many reasons, one of which is the easy way it is perceived as having with money, it is one of the three major European Union institutions, the others being the European Commission and the Council of Ministers. And the importance of the institution has grown over time, insofar as legislative amendments have given it additional powers. The importance of parliament is bespoken by the fact that only two days after an unsuccessful referendum on Cyprus, representatives from the Greek and Turkish communities as well as the UN special representative to Cyprus and the EC expansion official took part in a hearing before the parliament's foreign affairs committee. Such hearings are not conducted before a merely formal and insignificant parliament.

Much in the European Parliament depends on how active individual members are

Tunne Kelam, member of the European Parliament

For a newcomer from the Estonian Riigikogu, the working arrangement of the European Parliament, which allows continuous communications with various political groups, is quite striking. One of the most interesting aspects of the parliament's work is the fact that it is generally oriented to a constructive approach and consensus-building, and offers members of parliament many opportunities to actualize its role. The European Parliament is highly sensitive to unforeseen events anywhere in the world, especially if democracy and human rights are put in harm's way. For example, the new members of the European Parliament were able to seize the initiative in the issue of Ukrainian elections, which roused the European Commission and Council of Ministers out of a stupor. Here again, cooperation greatly exceeded the framework of political groups. The results were surprisingly positive. Due in large measure to pressure from the European Parliament, Ukraine refused to recognize the fraudulent election results and conditions were laid for a markedly more democratic and open procedure.

STUDIES AND OPINIONS

Baltic cooperation

Parliamentary cooperation of the Baltic countries – formation and possible prospects for the near future

Kristina Hallik, public relations adviser, Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Estonia

The main aims of Baltic cooperation in the years 1918–1940 and 1989–1991 were to establish a union engaged in security and foreign policy matters. During the first period, Finland, Poland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark were viewed as partners in addition to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Since 1989, only the three Baltic countries are included in the cooperation.

The Baltic Assembly, established in 1991, is a consultative and coordinating parliamentary organization, focused on discussing matters from very different fields of life. However, great attention has been paid to the foreign and security matters. The Baltic Assembly has undergone several institutional changes: the number of units, their competence, membership and the operating procedures have been changed and supplemented. The main functions of the Baltic Assembly are: concentrating on and emphasizing the joint interests, recruiting participants to the international political system and forwarding information.

Changes made in the framework of the reforms of Baltic cooperation (2003–2004) have raised the effectiveness of the cooperation and helped to optimize the economic and human resources involved in the activities.

The importance of the Baltic Assembly in the near future could be seen in the following functions: a) emphasizing and concentrating on common interests (to defend and coordinate the joint interests, to introduce them to other international actors and to draw the attention of other international actors to the specific problems of the Baltic states), b) forwarding information (to defend common interests and coordinate common activities), c) promoting the socializing process, which can proceed from the tightened cooperation with deeply integrated Nordic and Benelux models, d) recruiting new participants to the international system (the organization performs this function by being an example for other countries).

Educational studies

The unique and developing Estonian school

Ene-Silvia Sarv, scholar, Tallinn University Institute of Educational Research

Concern over the unequal level of schools has become greater in recent years and affects both parents and politicians. School reforms on both the macro and micro level are one of the factors that influence whether society will take shape as a sustainable learning society or as a corrupt society of risk. The article provides a short overview of the differences as of the beginning of 2005 between Estonian schools on the basis of the results of the school development plan study and a currently ongoing study entitled "The school as an environment for development and the success of students". So that the planning of changes would be expedient and management effective, it would be wise to take into consideration the characteristic features of different types of schools as well as the existence of various groups of teachers. Furthermore, the tendency of schools to develop as learning organizations that create knowledge requires that the universities where teachers are trained and the ministry that administers the schools align themselves accordingly.

What kind of curriculum for Estonian schools?

Viive-Riina Ruus, Tallinn University professor emeritus

Estonian education faces four possible paths: 1) to continue with the curriculum adopted in 2002 (RÕK 2002), 2) to use the general part of the curriculum prepared by the University of Tartu curriculum development center as a basis, 3) to use as a basis the general part of the curriculum prepared by Bit/Avita, 4) adapt the curriculum of the Republic of Finland. Unfortunately neither the University of Tartu development center's curriculum nor that of AS Bit is ripe for confirmation as a legal act, nor can we adopt the Finnish curriculum due to various cultural and historical differences. The latter option would be bad for Estonia also in the sense that no one would learn how to put together a curriculum. Thus it would be most reasonable to calmly continue with RÕK 2002 until the system of curricula for elementary, basic and middle education (includes vocational education after basic education) is ready, the ties with the following levels of education ensured and the necessary "bridges" between them built. This firstly requires the creation of a long-term educational strategy free of party-political calculations; this would ensure the stability of the educational system and would also be the basis for development of the curriculum.

Putting the school network in order – the requirement of equal access to education

Tiina Annus, director of the educational policy program at the Praxis Center for Policy Studies

Based on Estonia's demographic situation and considering the characteristics of regional development, a network of schools must be formed in a balanced manner as well as in a way that is informative and engaging for all interested parties. The basis for this article is a study, conducted by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Praxis Center for Policy Studies, entitled "Organization of the network of general educational schools". Analyses in the study show that from the elementary grades on up, students are becoming more concentrated in cities, especially big cities. By contrast, only about 20% of students are enrolled in the biggest problem group: small towns, parishes located between bigger areas, and peripheral parishes. The growth of city schools is favored by school migration, which in 2003 encompassed 14% of the entire student body. In fact there is not a single municipality in Estonia where all students are learning in their home parish or town.

Involving citizens in policy-making

Involving citizens and civic associations in policy formation in Estonia

Reesi Lepa, expert, Praxis Center for Policy Studies; chief expert at the Ministry of Education and Research

Eveli Illing, expert, Praxis Center for Policy Studies

One of the responsibilities of the state in fostering participatory democracy includes involving interest groups in regulatory and decision-making processes on broader terms. The main objectives for public consultation and participation are creating open and transparent decision-making procedures, increasing the level of trust of citizens, and improving the quality of democracy. Besides these, important aspects also include how to select an organization with whom to consult, the question of timing, giving feedback, evaluation of procedures, awareness of the aims and principles by all stakeholders, balancing the views of different interest groups.

For analyzing procedures and principles in Estonia in engaging interest groups into regulatory decision-making processes and to find out problems and needs, a survey was conducted in 2004 among chairmen of parliament committees and factions, department heads of the ministries and national representative organizations of NGOs and private enterprises. The survey was initiated and funded by the Open Estonia Foundation.

Attitudes towards engaging NGOs are rather pragmatic in Estonia. The idea of setting standards for engaging NGOs is quite novel, as the principles and procedures of engaging NGOs are not yet deeply rooted and parties have different opinions on the necessity of such standards. However, balanced consultation and participation should form a natural part of policymaking and help avoid problems in later stages. Efficiently engaging different interests is rather a question of attitude and approach than techniques.

It is recommended to adopt general rules or principles for getting citizens and NGOs involved in decision-making procedures. Engaging procedures must be open, balanced and transparent. A minimum time for consulting should be agreed upon – no less than 2 weeks, preferably 4 weeks – and feedback should be given to NGOs.

Citizenship policy

Estonian citizenship policy and a Citizens' Europe

Rein Ruutsoo, Tallinn University Department of Government, professor of political theory

Leif Kalev, Tallinn University Department of Government, legal policy assistant

The answer to the question whether in the future, European citizenship will serve only to supplement the set of civic rights in each member states, or be a first step in establishing world citizenship, will be provided by a Europe-wide debate in which Estonia is also a participant. At the same time, it must not be forgotten that the Estonia's postcolonial process of integration into a Citizens' Europe is in many ways more complicated than it is for many other new European Union member states. The central role that Estonian citizenship played in restoring national sovereignty has taken on special meaning in how citizens and citizenship are perceived, especially in the eyes of the older generation. This experience has shaped the world view and attitudes of today's legislators. The problems of expanding citizenship, including the problems of multiple citizenship, are to a notable extent still perceived not in a European Union context, but rather defined in large part as a response to a significant other, as it were, a neoimperialist-revanchist Russian policy. An important factor in strengthening the Citizens' Europe mentality will likely be time. Nationalist estatism, which is an important factor in the eyes of the older generation in giving nationality content, will in the future continue inevitably to be less and less of a yardstick.

Agricultural policy

The competitiveness of Estonian agriculture: the situation and future prospects

Janno Reiljan, member of the Riigikogu, Estonian People's Union, adjunct professor of foreign economics, University of Tartu

Dorel Tamm, University of Tartu, graduate student, international business faculty

Considering the important social functions played by agriculture, which besides ensuring population density and jobs in the countryside, ensures the self-sufficiency of food production, the importance of agriculture should be much greater than it is currently. Unfortunately, due to poor competitive conditions, Estonian agriculture has since 1990 lost nearly three-quarters of its share of GDP and jobs. The level of self-sufficiency fell so much during the transition period that currently a major part of consumption is covered by imports. The future does not look all bad, however, since accession to the European Union will improve markedly the international competitive position of Estonian agriculture. Thus a rise in the manufacturing level and improvement of self-sufficiency is imminent in the next few years. Estonian agriculture's natural resource base is in itself fairly good, since due to relatively thin population density, we have much more per capita cropland than the European Union average. Land is also very cheap compared to industrialized countries.

Environmental taxes

Ecological tax reform and sustainable development

Tea Nõmmann, Turku's Åbo Akademi, graduate student

The tax policy that Estonia has to date followed – creating a climate favorable to the private sector and motivating employees – has been criticized as well as praised, the latter on the international level. On the other hand, the opportunities of this policy to reduce the effect of environmental pollution as well as the inefficient consumption of natural resources and inadvisable activities has not been systematically evaluated. A solution is seen in ecological tax reform, which holds far-reaching opportunities to push consumer culture in the direction of

greater sustainability. Based on the needs of preparing ecological tax reform, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications and Eesti Energia ordered an analysis from an international group of experts on the macroeconomic effect on Estonia of establishing a carbon dioxide tax. To evaluate the effect, a general balance model was created which, once the CO₂ tax is established, will allow the effect of changes in the energy sector on other sectors and, in aggregate, on the entire economy to be gauged. This is a base model for analyzing the Estonian economy and does not yet take into account all possible factors (demographics, technology, tendency for savings etc); these can be considered in the future as the model takes shape. Developed further, this prototype can be used to analyze the effects of other natural resources and pollution taxes.

Public opinion surveys

The Eurobarometer as a source of information on European society

Jaanika Hämmäl, EMOR sociologist

Eurobarometer studies – public opinion surveys conducted in European Union member states and candidate countries – have been organized for over thirty years. Eurobarometer encompasses various types of studies which are designed based on the need to gather information from various target groups of varying response times and comprehensiveness. The quantitative studies are:

Standard Eurobarometer and Special Eurobarometer carried out among citizens of the European Union aged 15 years and up. The use of trend questions allows changes in the opinions of inhabitants to be analyzed over time.

Flash EBs are surveys conducted by telephone which elicit the opinions of the target groups – population, entrepreneurs, young people, and so on – in an efficient manner. Studies where Estonia was included focused on topics related to the euro, the European constitution, and elections to European Parliament among others.

Candidate Countries Eurobarometer (CCEB) was organized from 2001–2004 (spring) and allowed a glimpse into pre-accession opinions and attitudes.

In addition, Eurobarometer qualitative studies are also carried out, which often help to supplement quantitative surveys or design new ones. In Estonia, all surveys are conducted by TNS Emor, part of the TNS chain of pollsters. Survey results are published on the European Commission website: http://europa.EuropeanUnion.int/comm/public_opinion/.

The article also provides a brief overview of the results of Eurobarometer, comparing how satisfied Estonians and Europeans are with life (on average, Estonians are less satisfied than Europeans with various areas of life, but they are more positive regarding the economic development of the state), how they see themselves as European citizens (prior to accession, Estonians felt less connected to Europe than did other Europeans, there was also less pride felt over being European) and sports preferences (Estonia is part of the bottom third of European countries in terms of sports activity), as well as briefly listing Estonians' positions with regard to the European Union after the first half-year as a member state.

Social policy

Wiping out poverty in Great Britain

Mike Buckley, senior adviser in the British Ministry of Work and Pensions

Katre Pall, Ministry of Social Affairs, manager of benefits policy

The primary goal of the government of Great Britain is to give everyone the opportunity to escape the clutches of poverty and social exclusion, and a long-term antipoverty strategy has been designed. Over the last 20 years hundreds of poor regions were stuck in a downward spiral, and people – some only one street over from each other – lived on separate sides of a great divide. Children who grew up in unfavorable conditions became adults working for low wages or living off welfare, who, even when they retire, are forced to continue living in poverty.

With this in mind, the government resolved in its long-term programs to wipe out poverty among children by the year 2020, counter the loss of human resources from long-term unemployment, allow everyone able to work the opportunity to do so, ensure security for those unable to work, ensure that people retain security and independence upon retiring, and offer high-quality public services so that all could enjoy a decent living standard. That is the contribution of Great Britain to achieving the long-term goal of the European Union, which is wiping out poverty throughout Europe.

Propaganda in theory and practice

Propaganda from Aristotle to the present day

Agu Uudelepp, lecturer at the Tallinn University of Technology's Department of Humanities and Social Sciences; spokesman, Estonian People's Union

Propaganda began to be studied on a theoretical level after World War I. The successful campaigns of that era in influencing the masses and the new insights into mass psychology laid the foundation for the belief in the possibility of achieving almost total control over people through the use of propaganda. After World War II, propaganda's golden age came to a close the realization dawned that it would be very hard to create anything new in people by using propaganda. Instead they would have to draw on earlier notions and habits in influencing people, using arguments aimed at the emotions and based on sociocultural background. Arguments could be rational, but their influence had to be emotional. The technologies employed by propagandists were largely already in existence by the beginning of World War II. They were enhanced and adapted during the latter half of the 20th century, but the principles did not change. They did not have to change, for whatever theoretical innovations there have been have not required new technologies. Thus, even though the 20th century was an era of rapid development in propaganda theory, the ways that people could be influenced essentially remained the same. The main goal continues to be to divert people's attention from rational arguments, to channel their thinking into the emotional drainage area, thus creating behavior amenable to the propagandist's purposes.

CIVIC SOCIETY AND STATE AUTHORITY

Volunteer work

Challenges of volunteer work in Estonia

Anna Gramberg, Tartu Volunteer Center coordinator; Tallinn University master's degree student

Margit Vutt, attorney with the Fides law office; University of Tartu master's degree student

The article provides an overview of volunteer work in Estonia, highlights major problems and needs in developing volunteer work and offers ways of creating an environment favorable to volunteering through legal regulation, state policies and support systems. Volunteer activity has developed more slowly in Estonia than in other European Union states. Similarly to other Central and Eastern European countries, our society lacks a common conception of what volunteer activity is. Even though volunteer activity in Estonia is making strides, little by little, a continuing problem is a low level of knowledge and lack of an overview about volunteer work, a low level of value and merit ascribed by the community to such work, lack of subsidization by public authorities, and the inability of organizations to recruit volunteers. It is also necessary to create a legal framework for supporting volunteer work, to define the legal status of volunteer, to determine what the relationship is between volunteers and the organization they work for as well as between the volunteer and the beneficiary of the work, and how to compensate expenses connected to volunteering. To better organize and develop the sector, a national body is needed to design policies that support volunteering and would implement the corresponding measures. There is also a clear need for support structures (for example, volunteer centers), which would help direct activity, involve volunteers and advise organizations that enlist volunteers.

Civic participation in decision-making

Democratic decision-making models – a cure for alienation

Andres Siplane, Tallinn University, graduate student

In a situation where all democracies are suffering from alienation, lack of trust and low electoral turnout, it is natural that people are looking for new democratic instruments or reviving old ones. Despite the complexity of society, even now there is a striving for direct democratic ideals, which means that ordinary citizens are participating in decision-making to the maximum degree. At the same time, critics of direct democracy stress that the prerequisite of decision-making is a political education and unfortunately people today are not able to be competent in all areas at the same time. The article points to the fact that actually the question is not about any system – democracy, corporate democracy or representative democracy – having an absolute advantage, but about the users of these models. If citizens are to have their own state and take it seriously, then various decision-making models and methods must be used to achieve that goal.

HISTORY OF THE PARLIAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

History of legislation

Parliamentary legislation – the advantage of the free development of the Estonian state

Hulda Sauks, consultant, Legal Department of the Chancellery of the Riigikogu

The article provides an overview of the legislative work of the 7th, 8th and 9th composition of the Riigikogu in restoring and strengthening Estonia's sovereignty, developing fundamental civic rights and setting forth the prerequisites for the state's transition to a market economy. The introductory part covers in brief the legislative activity of the Estonian Supreme Council's 11th and 12th composition, because it was these members that laid the juridical foundation for the restoration of Estonia's independence and an independent constitutional rule of law.

The main part of the article is devoted to the legislation adopted by the Riigikogu and it is treated according to each major field of regulation – sovereignty and state protection, ensuring fundamental rights, development of the law of obligations and penal power, creating conditions for the reemergence of private property. In the case of several legal acts, its development is shown briefly from an initial superficial act to a set of regulations that regulate the field in depth. As examples of such laws, the Government of the Republic Act and the Commercial Code are profiled. Other laws typical of their sector are also selected for inclusion in the article on the basis of their importance to the state or based on general interest. The article also touches on some opinions from legal scholars on the work of the Riigikogu in various periods and examines the connections of the Estonian legal system to Continental European legal models.

The article attempts to make better sense of the significance of the work of parliament for the entire nation as well as its complexity, considering that all of the relations in society, in their diversity and complexity, are subject to regulation.

A survey of Estonian legislation from the standpoint of economic, social and cultural issues as well as foreign affairs is to be presented in the second part of the same article in the next issue of Riigikogu Toimetised.

The Riigikogu's international relations

Three political trips from 1993

Mati Hint, member of the 7th Riigikogu, Tallinn University professor emeritus

The author, a former member of parliament, recalls the trips of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe non-member states committee to a session in Albania from 6–10 September 1993 and the Greek peacekeeping organization KEADEA as well as to the European Conference on Peace, Democracy and Cooperation in the Balkans organized by Russian and Balkan peace committees in Greece from 10–16 November 1993.

LITERATURE AND DATABASES

Scientific information as the cornerstone of a knowledge-based society

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One of the cornerstones of knowledge-based society is access to information on science and technology. Being responsible for its quality, comprehensiveness and availability has been the primary task of academic libraries ever since they were established. Just ten years ago, academic libraries considered developing information and communications technology and creating an integrated library system the most important item on the agenda. Now information needs and information seeking behavior have risen to the fore, along with procurement and mediation of electronic information resources and raising information literacy. The article covers changes in the legislative regulation of academic libraries, requirements for academic libraries, procedures for naming academic and archives libraries and public funding of libraries through ministry of education and science. An overview is given of the assembling of a standard collection compilation, and major developments in academic libraries. Thanks to state financing and joint procurements of electronic resources through the ELNET Consortium, the supply of academic information has improved markedly in the last few years. In 2004 the full texts of more than 15 000 magazines and nearly 20,000 e-books could be accessed. Magazines formed nearly 90% of the total periodical titles. Unfortunately, many different interfaces and search systems must be used to search for e-resources, which lengthens the time spent on searches and without adequate poor preparation will not give a comprehensive result. To compensate for this deficiency, a common information portal for academic libraries is planned, which allows metasearches – a search of all accessible e-resources simultaneously through one interface.