

Summaries in English

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S COLUMN

In defence of history

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

Talking about history has become popular and often two mutually exclusive arguments are heard. The first of these – and this is also the accepted view in historiography – claims that although history itself is objective, historiography is always subjective. Sometimes the call goes out for everyone to write their own history. In principle, everyone could do just that, for historians do not have a monopoly on history. However, in that case, the writer and reader must be aware that this is the case. Otherwise one event could end up looming large, while another one is completely overlooked. No doubt the work of writers, politicians, poets, film-makers have a greater impact on people's historical consciousness than weighty historical treatises do. At the same time, I believe the view that it is never possible to gain an objective picture of history also to be fraught with risks. Actually, it *is* possible, by comparing the findings of the work of various credible researchers and scholars, to obtain a fairly authentic account of a given event. Of course it must be taken into account that historiography does not give rapid answers. It is not the case that if we create an institute for historical memory today, half a year later they will lay a book on our table. Yet we should be prepared to recognize how the narrative pattern of Estonians' historical memory has taken shape. It has undoubtedly played a very important role in determining who we are as individuals and as an independent state. And, for a better understanding of ourselves, we should be able also to take a critical view of our historical memory.

The Republic of Estonia is about to turn 90, though due to interruptions in our history, it is sometimes complicated for us to say how old we are. If we think back to the time that Estonia became a sovereign state, it appears that the decision-makers of that time made superb decisions and indeed the only right ones. In fact there would have been no other course of action... Our conventional consciousness remembers three names – Vilms, Konik and Päts. Yet the number of decision-makers was several times greater. At decisive moments in history, the end result is influenced by those who are in favour as well as by those who are against. And the decision-makers do not know in advance the consequences of their decisions. Even though the newsreels are often black-and-white, history itself is always Technicolor, and also contains half-tones. I would like us to reflect more on the fact that we *are* living in the Estonian era and that this era continues to be the current one.

ESSAY

History as cultural memory: continuity and repetition in the Estonian historical memory

Marek Tamm, *Lecturer of Cultural Theory, the Estonian Institute of Humanities at Tallinn University*

As is well known, the concept of memory entered into contemporary discussions by way of its opposition to history. However, following Peter Burke, and relying on concepts introduced by Jan Assmann, the article argues that the traditional understanding of the relation between memory and written history, in which memory reflects what actually happened and history reflects memory, is far too simple. Therefore, it is more fruitful to consider history as a form of *cultural memory*. Cultural memory, as defined by Jan Assmann, consists of 'objectified culture', that is, of the texts, rites, images, buildings, and monuments that are designed to recall decisive events in the history of the given collective. Cultural memory-studies focus on the multiple ways in which images of the past are communicated to and shared among the members of a community, highlighting the importance of remembering certain parts of the past and forgetting, or ignoring others.

In the article a few features that characterize the cultural memory in Estonia are discussed in more detail. The author's intention is to analyze 'what Estonians remember of their past'. For this purpose, he uses the concept of 'mnemohistory', introduced by Jan Assmann. Differently from history proper (but not opposed to it), mnemohistory relinquishes a positivistic investigation of the past in favour of an analysis of how the past is remembered.

The article's main argument is that narrative plays a crucial role in the construction of a consistent national past. As stated by James Wertsch (2002), narrative form is an important cultural tool for grouping together a set of events into a coherent whole. Thus, a nation can be viewed not just as a "commemorative community", but also as a "narrative community". The narrative defines a boundary between members who share the common past and those who do not. National identity is, to a large extent, based on "stories we live by". More precisely, they are based on schematic narrative templates which give coherence to nation's past. These narrative templates are not universal archetypes, but belong instead to particular narrative traditions and are to be found only in the cultural memory.

In the Estonian case, there is a clear tendency to reduce all the major political events to a narrative template – what could be called 'the great struggle for freedom'. This narrative template combines all prominent conflicts with Germans that we have in our cultural memory into one coherent plot, starting with the Christianization of the thirteenth century (which in national historical writing is called the Ancient Struggle for Freedom) until the so-called War of Independence of 1918-1920, which was fought against the Bolshevik Red Army, but out of which the cultural memory has given prominence to a battle against Baltic German forces (*Landeswehr*), near Võnnu (Latvian name Csis) in the summer of 1919. In this narrative template, all previous uprisings against the Germans had ended in defeat, but were only temporary in nature, while Võnnu became the final victory of the Great Struggle for Freedom. As the national master narrative is conveyed and sustained by ritual performances, also some major commemorative rituals, first of all the national Victory Day, established in 1934, connected to the "the great struggle for freedom" narrative are discussed.

POLITICAL FORUM

Financing of political parties

Financing of political parties seems to be (or is) opaque

RiTo conversation circle

On 26 November, Riigikogu Toimetised assembled a panel of politicians and experts to discuss the topic of political party financing in Estonia. The politicians were represented in the conversation circle by members of the Riigikogu Väino Linde (Reform Party), Kadri Must (Centre Party) and Urmas Reinsalu (Pro Patria and Res Publica Union), while the experts consisted of constitutional law scholar Ülle Madise (Tallinn University of Technology), political science scholar Tõnis Saarts (Tallinn University) and journalist Tarmu Tammerk (Transparency International-Estonia). RiTo editor-in-chief Helle Ruusing asked questions and made a selection of the comments from discussion. The participants in the conversation circle agreed that no democratic state governed by the rule of law had as yet managed to come up with the ideal party financing system. The same can be said about the system for supervision of financing. Estonia's political parties currently receive money from three sources – the state budget, private donations and political party membership dues. There is currently debate in political circles as to whether financing from the state budget should be increased and funding from private sources simultaneously decreased. One camp is in favour of the amendment, while another contingent does not feel it is reasonable. Another possible restriction is setting some sort of upper limit to campaign spending, so that the advertising volumes would not exceed the limits of reason. In the end, one idea that seemed to resonate was that the current system of financing parties is not a bad one, or open to corruption; rather it treats all parties equally. The rules are the same for everyone. Parties are required to submit four types of reports on income and expenditures. At the same

time, the ideal is by definition slightly beyond our reach and there must be continual progress toward it. There must be continuous thought devoted to what kinds of rules for financing parties are reasonable and how to ensure that they are obeyed. It must be said that politicians have the desire to discuss constructively the system for financing parties and the related supervisory system.

Regional policy

Problems of regional administration in Estonia

Vallo Reimaa, Minister of Regional Affairs, Pro Patria and Res Publica Union

For the purposes of regional policy, the local government regional administrative level is generally considered to be a region in the European Union. Estonia's current county governments are not therefore the subject of regional policy in the European sense. County associations of local governments, on the other hand, are not sufficiently well-developed. In the course of regional administration, the current county governments should in the future become above all an institution which performs state supervision. The county would become a region for cooperation between local government units led by a county association of local governments. The primary function of this arrangement is to ensure the comprehensive and balanced development of the county and to link branch policies to each other on the regional level through a county development plan. In addition to the level of representation of local inhabitants, the decision-making powers of the institution that represents them would increase as well, and both the state and the interests of the population in the county would stand to gain as a result.

Integration policy

Integration in Estonian society

Urve Palo, Minister for Population Affairs, Social Democratic Party

The process of developing Estonia's new integration strategy began in late 2005, and the working version of the strategy entitled "Integration in Estonian society 2008-2013", which is currently undergoing public discussion, was completed at the beginning of the current year. However, the events of April led us to review the content of this document. Starting in June, a number of additional studies have been performed – including both public opinion surveys and in-depth interviews. In addition, a couple hundred amendment proposals have come in during the public discussion. After analyzing the aforementioned studies and additional proposals, we reached an understanding that it would not be enough to update and correct the old integration strategy; instead, a new one needs to be compiled. About one hundred people are currently working on it on various levels. There are few, if any, areas of policymaking in Estonia where involvement is so broad-based.

A strong foundation keeps the tower from leaning

Katrin Saks, Member of European Parliament, Social Democratic Party

As we put into words the national objectives in Estonia's new integration programme, we would do well to avoid words that touch off major arguments, such as "nation-state" or "multiculturalism". Instead, we should describe the society which we wish to achieve and in which we ourselves want to live. I believe that we will be able to reach agreement that our common goal is an Estonia with a strong national (state) identity, whose citizens are well-adapted, use Estonian as their common language for communicating with each other, and where the state supports, as it is able, the preservation of the national identity. In speaking about Estonian immigration, we tend to forget that non-Estonians make up nearly one-third of the population and they are far from a unified, homogeneous group but rather a people whose readiness and ability to adapt varies greatly from one

region to another. For this reason, I believe that the state integration programme must encompass large-scale projects. Integration is a long-term, continuous process in which all people take part, whether they are citizens or not.

Integration in Estonia's general educational schools

Tõnis Lukas, Minister of Education and Research, Pro Patria and Res Publica Union

Estonian-language instruction occupies a central place in those of the Republic of Estonia's schools which have Russian as the language of instruction. This is in order to ensure that all graduates have equal opportunity to be successful in society and that they are competitive in their further studies and on the job market. This academic year it is possible to obtain a secondary school education in Russian in 63 schools. Estonian literature continues to be taught in Estonian at all of the schools where a 10th grade class was active. Two-thirds of the schools with Russian as the language of instruction have several years of experience teaching subjects in the Estonian language. Besides Estonian literature, these schools currently also teach 23 different subjects in Estonian. In addition to the subjects taught on the upper secondary level, many of the schools with Russian as the language of instruction have also implemented the teaching of at least one subject on the basic school level in Estonian. The introduction of the teaching of Estonian-language subjects – at a rate faster than set forth in legislation – shows that schools have willingly embraced the process and are doing all they can to offer an increasing amount of Estonian-language instruction.

Economic policy

The near future of the Estonian economy as seen through the eyes of the Minister of Finance

Ivari Padar, Minister of Finance, Social Democratic Party

The primary risks related to the Estonian economic environment are currently related to strong inflationary pressure, the extensive cooling of the real estate market, and the large current account deficit. Under the current currency board arrangement, budgetary policy is our primary means of influencing the economy and controlling risks to balanced economic development. In a situation where in recent months inflation has predominantly stemmed from factors in the external environment and where future excise duty hikes are written into legislation, the state lacks measures to control short-term inflationary pressures. The only thing within our power is to continue a countercyclical budgetary policy which prevents the state from adding to the inflationary pressure, and which also allows the government to avoid excessive administrative price hikes. Conservative fiscal policy will ensure that the public sector has a low debt burden, which is in turn one requirement for maintaining sustainability of state finance in the long term.

Personnel expenses of state institutions must be transparent

Tarmo Kriis, Chairman, Estonian Employers' Confederation

Employers in the private sector do not consider it right that, at state budget negotiations, the Ministry of Finance is presented with a plan for additional hiring of new officials, which it is not planned to fulfil later. A number of vacant positions are planned in ministries' area of administration – in other words, “dead souls” or “empty holes” that are financed from the state budget but will not be physically filled by anyone. Instead of writing the resources left over from unfilled positions to reserve or transferring them to the next fiscal year, state institutions are using the resources as suits their purposes. This kind of planning of personnel expenses has become the target of strong criticism. Employers are especially bothered by the fact that the state does not wish to rectify the situation in any way and trading of “empty holes” is considered a normal phenomenon.

CONSTITUTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Constitutional justice

Fifteen years of judicial constitutional review in Estonia

Katrin Saaremäel-Stoilov, adviser, Constitutional Review Chamber of the Supreme Court

Heinrich Schneider, adviser, Constitutional Review Chamber of the Supreme Court

Already in the process of drafting the first constitution of the Republic of Estonia in the Constituent Assembly's constitutional committee, aspects related to supervision of constitutionality were discussed at length. But then, just as the idea of judicial supervision of constitutionality had been debated a number of times and the idea had reached a stage of maturity where it could be implemented, the opportunity to realize the idea was lost for half a century. The restoration of independence became the milestone from which we can start reckoning the era of judicial constitutional review in Estonia, as Article 149 of the Constitution adopted by referendum on 29 June 1992 states that the Supreme Court is the highest court in the state, and that it also the court of constitutional review. The first session of the Constitutional Review Chamber of the Supreme Court took place on 22 June 1993, where it deliberated on the President of the Republic's proposal to declare the National Coat of Arms Act unconstitutional. Twelve such applications have been submitted to the Supreme Court from the office of President; and 20 from the Chancellor of Justice. These challenges dominated the first six years, contributing to the development of abstract regulatory supervision in Estonia. They also allowed the boundaries of the competence of constitutional institutions to be precisely determined and served as a good lesson for courts of the lower instances, which from 1999 on would become the predominant bodies seeking legal acts to be declared unconstitutional. Although the assessments of foreign experts regarding the early period of constitutional supervision practice have been fairly critical, the Supreme Court has had a great capacity for learning and has been able to increasingly focus on the central issues of constitutional supervision that have come before it.

STUDIES AND OPINIONS

Tax morality

Tax morality as an influence on tax obedience

Kerly Lillemets, Tallinn University of Technology doctoral candidate

Tax morals – in the sense of the readiness of an individual to pay taxes in the extent required – is an important foundation of tax obedience and is influenced by many factors. Tax obedience has become an object of interest to economic psychology, as payment of taxes has created a social dilemma in society – whether to pay or not to pay – and for various reasons the selfish actions of individuals are favoured over the interest of society. The inability of classic economic theory to explain the level of tax obedience and its factors has created the need for analysis through special studies as to whether social norms and views influence people's readiness to pay taxes, and what the effect of cultural norms and public administration is on people's tax behaviour. The findings confirm that tax morality is affected by individuals' views of the fairness of taxes, trust in the state, conscious use of tax revenue, and individual and cultural characteristics. Due to the abundance of factors that affect tax morality, an attempt to interpret the taxpayer's economic behaviour can be confusing. One reason is undoubtedly the lack of a clear definition of the idea of tax morality and the heterogeneity of empirical studies. The question of tax obedience is just as old as taxes themselves and will remain an area of research as long as taxes exist.

Innovation

Coordination of innovation policy in Estonia

Raivo Linnas, Tallinn University of Technology, PhD candidate in public administration

The Riigikogu and the Government of the Republic face a serious task – influencing the factors impeding the implementation of innovation policy. Above all, the leaders of innovation policy should find Estonia a suitable model for coordinating innovation policy, be it open coordination or some other method. The importance of coordination in the public sector is due to the typically multifaceted nature of the decision-makers and implementers in this sector. Cross-disciplinary coordination in Estonian public administration is nearly completely lacking, the coordination function cannot be distinguished from central management, and there is confusion and conflict between the proportions of centralism and decentralism. Existing knowledge and skills are not used in the best possible manner in order to fulfil the task of coordination; rather, this is done in a partisan and corporate manner. The institutions in the role of coordinating public administration have generally not been successful in their activity to date. When it comes to coordinating innovation policy, Estonia is facing a situation which tends toward decentralization and putting the open coordination method into practice, as the major part of innovation policy makers are outside of the direct field of influence of politicians.

Involvement

Use of online forums by local governments in Estonia and Norway

Kristina Reinsalu, University of Tartu, Department of Journalism and Communication doctoral candidate

The Internet is in its democratic ideal form a tool forenhancing citizens' participation in political life. For participation in local politics and life, citizens can read or send comments in different forums operated by local municipalities and local newspapers. Besides Internet access and other technical preconditions for using the Internet, there are certainly very many other motives and factors which influence people's readiness for and activity in online participation. Comparing political participation in an old and new democracy through a channel that is equally new to both populations, the article tries to answer the question: Are old democracies more likely to embrace and integrate this additional form of participation, or does it possess more political importance in new democracies?

The research questions will be answered through a comparative study of data from population surveys in Norway and Estonia. The survey of Norway is limited to certain regions, whereas the Estonian survey is nationwide. Our focus is on local government because it is at the local level that citizens most directly experience the presence of the government and can act as active public agents. In both countries, the local level provides a large part of the public services, and local politics thus closely affect people's lives.

We based our definition of civic culture on the model of Dahlgren, according to which the most important components of civic culture are spaces, values, identities, skills and practices. With this as our point of departure, we sketched out how these components of civic culture could be connected to the level of participation, the motives of online participation and the composition of online participants.

One of the most striking findings is connected to the relation of e-activity and general political activity. In Norway, e-activity rises slightly with political activity until the group with high general political activity, which is remarkably more e-active than other groups. In Estonia, the situation is different. First, even the group with non-existent political activity contains 6% of those whom we can regard as e-active. Second, the break point in e-activity starts already from the group with medium e-activity.

Generally, it appears that activity in online-participation is not strongly related to civic culture. Estonia is a highly unique example where the developments of civic culture and ICT have been interwoven – the former was strongly influenced by the latter, which, in turn, has left its impression on democracy in Estonia. In Norway, on the contrary, the democratic systems were advanced enough to render online participation just an alternative among others, which therefore deserved less attention. Thus, we can conclude also that the potential of the Internet for increasing participation and democracy exists.

Parliament

Draft laws introduced by MPs in the Riigikogu – pseudo-legislation or the real thing?

Mihkel Solvak, University of Tartu, Department of Political Science doctoral candidate

In analyzing the objectives of draft legislation tabled by members of parliament, it has been noted that they are often introduced for ulterior objectives, not out of a desire to make a contribution to the legislation. In the knowledge that the likelihood of the bill becoming law is small, the introduction of such bills thus constitutes an offered potential alternative to the government policy. Such allegedly improper use of draft laws has been called pseudo-legislation. The writer takes a look at whether, and to what extent, it is possible to use the concept of pseudo-legislation to describe the bills introduced by Riigikogu MPs. It is concluded on the basis of analysis of the technical structure and course of proceedings conducted on bills introduced by MPs in the 10th Riigikogu (2003-2007) and the identity of the MPs, that there are clear characteristics that allow the introduction of and conducting of proceedings on many of the bills to indeed be construed as pseudo-legislation. At the same time other characteristics are also evident which indicate that it is not always justified to classify such bills as pseudo-legislation.

The mandate of a member of parliament and minister, and potential compatibility

Tiina Runthal, University of Tartu, Institute of Law, master's degree candidate

Drawing on her familiarity with practices in different countries, the writer raises the question of whether it would be expedient for Estonia to abandon the requirement that a member of parliament may not simultaneously hold a minister's post and vice versa. In Estonia, the functions of member of parliament and government are kept strictly separate. The primary workplace of a member of the Riigikogu is in the Riigikogu, and thus an MP may hold any other position or fulfil tasks that are in conflict with the principle of separation of powers or which may in some other way cause a conflict of interest in the activity of a member of the Riigikogu. The separate performance of the functions of MP and minister prevents power from becoming absolute. Since Estonia joined the European Union, the workload of the current members of the Riigikogu has decreased compared to previous Riigikogu bodies, as the era of major reforms is over. By combining the mandate of member of parliament and the post of minister, the cooperation between the two parties would become stronger and perhaps the reputation of the Riigikogu and the government would increase. Although ministers will continue to be politically responsible, as MPs they are interested in maintaining the good reputation of parliament. At the same time there is cause for concern that power will become concentrated, especially considering the small size of Estonia.

Environmental policy

Environmental liability in light of the Environmental Liability Act

Evelin Lopman, adviser to the Chancellor of Justice

Triin Nymann, lawyer, Legal Department of the Ministry of the Environment

The Riigikogu adopted the Environmental Liability Act. The Act does not regulate all liability for environmental matters or compensation of all damage done to the entire environment. This article deals with the so-called borderline areas of the Act; Environmental Liability Act: what sort of liability the legislation governs and what kind it does not, what is covered by the definition of environmental damage, and why a certain part of the environment was omitted from the Act.

The state can be viewed as the representative of society and the expression of the collective interest, and as a result has the right to demand damages from a person causing damage to the environment per se.

Damaged environment is viewed as an independent integral whole which has become damaged, and which the person perpetrating the damage must compensate; but it also covers damage in the form of a reduction in the quality or quantity of the benefits and values offered by environment to society. In the event of damage to the environment, an attempt is made to reinstate the situation predating the damage, similarly to the case of compensation of any other damage. The objective is to achieve a situation identical or equivalent to that which preceded the damage (or as close to it as possible) – without payment of monetary compensation. The party which perpetrated the damage must restore the state of the environment to the original situation – in actuality, not merely notionally, as would be entailed by the payment of a monetary compensation.

For the purposes of the environmental damages directive, four environmental components are covered: protected species, protected natural habitat types, water and soil. Marine waters are thus excluded from the purview of environmental liability (except for coastal waters, generally 1 nautical mile from the coast), ambient air, including noise and radiation, species of birds and animals not under protection, landscapes and recreational areas.

In addition to species protected on a European level, the Environmental Liability Act covers species which are rare and valued in Estonia – the species under conservation in accordance with the Nature Conservation Act. According to the legislation, conservation areas and special conservation areas established on the basis of domestic legal acts, species protection sites and individual natural sites (protected zones) are included under environmental liability. If damage occurs to protected species and habitats, an important stipulation of the Environmental Liability Act is that the case must involve a significant unfavourable impact, which the Nature Conservation Act classifies as an influence which jeopardizes achieving or maintaining a favourable status for a species or habitat. Just as in the case of species and habitats, damage to waters also has an applicable threshold, beyond which damage is considered to be significant and becomes subject to the Environmental Liability Act. This threshold is a worsening in the water class which is determined by the water's qualitative (including ecological, chemical and physical) and quantitative indicators.

In Natura areas, nature protection takes centre stage over other considerations

Hannes Veinla, Docent of Environmental Law, University of Tartu

A look at Estonian legal practice often leaves the impression that we have not yet acceded to the European Union, as Estonian law is the only kind which is known and applied, even if Estonian law is in direct conflict with the law of the Community. A good example of such a conflict is the recent incident of logging in Suurupi, where it appeared that Estonian law did not provide for a way to prohibit the logging, but where from the standpoint of European law a prohibition was obvious as this was a Natura “preselection” area.

There are many such areas in Estonia and thus the problem is extremely salient. Namely, nature conservation interests often collide with economic and related social interests on the Natura areas. Such conflicts have occurred repeatedly in other European Union member states and they have been discussed in the European Court of Justice as well. The analysis presented in this article is based on

the positions of the European Court. The following should be highlighted in the positions of the European Court.

The strict protective regime applied in Natura areas draws on the principle of providing high-quality environmental protection as stipulated in the treaty establishing the European Communities. Selection of Natura areas may not proceed on the basis of other criteria (such as economic and social considerations) besides ecological ones. The nature conservation regime applied in Natura areas applies not just in Natura areas but also outside of them if the activity planned there can influence the objectives of Natura protection. In what is known as the Waddenzee court case, the European Court of Justice ruled that all plans and activities must be evaluated if there is a lack of total certainty that they will not have an impact on a Natura area. The assessment must be very thorough, and all of the impacts that are in principle possible must be evaluated – not only the ones that are the most likely. The European Court of Justice has also said that if there is even the shadow of a doubt with regard to a negative impact, the plan or activity may not in general be permitted. Projects with a potential negative impact may be allowed in exceptional cases, if three conditions are fulfilled. The first of these is an absence of alternative solutions. The competent institutions of the member state must evaluate whether there are alternatives to the planned activity in the case of which the objective of protecting Natura areas can be better achieved. Another case where an exception may be made is when certain imperative and extraordinarily important public interests necessitate that the implementation of the plan or project should proceed. For the purposes of the directive, these would be not priorities (as Estonian law sets forth) but rather imperative and extraordinarily important reasons. The third condition is that all appropriate compensatory measures are adopted. If all of these conditions are fulfilled, a plan or project which negatively impacts an area may be allowed to proceed.

The European Court of Justice has justified its radicalism with the fact that the economic interests competing with nature conservation are always exceedingly aggressive. Consequently other interests that serve as a counterweight to them must be just as aggressive. There is no point at all in “meek and mild” nature conservation; it will always wind up on the losing side.

Compiling the development plan for use of oil shale: a lesson in extensive involvement

Agnes Jürgens, adviser to the Public Relations Department, Ministry of the Environment

Oil shale is a strategic natural asset for Estonia which ensures independence for the state in the field of energy. Unfortunately, the state's interest in using oil shale resources was to this point undefined. To close this gap, a draft national development plan was prepared on the basis of a government decision and organized by the Ministry of Environment, which was seen by Ministry personnel in hindsight as a tense lesson in involving different interested parties. This development plan was not namely drawn up in the silence of some ministry office, but prepared in front of everybody, with many institutions and interest groups participating. Among other things, the topic of oil shale utilization was thoroughly discussed in public, as more than 600 articles were published in the press on the topic.

Eesti Pank

Functions and assets of Eesti Pank after the transition to the euro

Janno Reiljan, Professor of International Economics, University of Tartu

The article aims to analyze the change in the role of Eesti Pank that will occur after the transition from the kroon to the euro. The article is based on a discussion the author developed with representatives of Eesti Pank on the occasion of the amendment of the Eesti Pank Act in the Riigikogu. No monetary system can effectively function if decision-making is decentralized. This being the case, we can no longer speak of an independent state central bank (one that is empowered to make decisions) in the euro zone, as the former central banks will become regional units of the European Central Banking

System and will fulfil the decisions of the European Central Bank. Undoubtedly the preparation of reports and forecasts about Estonia and the presentation of these to the European Central Bank – as well as ensuring fulfilment of the decisions of the European Central Bank – will be an important and labour-intensive job. But calling what is essentially a regional branch of the European Union’s central institution, with no actual decision-making power of its own, a “state central bank” would be misleading and create the wrong impression of the possibilities and problems of Estonian monetary policy in the euro zone. After the introduction of the common currency, the argument of Eesti Pank that the goal of the bank is “ensuring the stability of the banking and finance system” would have questionable value, as this function is supposedly not in the purview of the European Union. Eesti Pank has no special mechanisms for influencing the banking or finance system. On the contrary, Eesti Pank itself must abandon the established special requirements in order to ensure equal competition conditions throughout the euro zone.

CIVIC SOCIETY AND STATE AUTHORITY

Alcohol policy

Estonian civic associations in alcohol policy planning

Kersti Kollom, Estonian Institute of Humanities at Tallinn University and Åbo Akademi, sociology doctoral candidate

Unlike other Northern European countries, Estonia’s civic associations have not to this point been active in shaping alcohol policy and alleviating alcohol problems. Systematic analysis of alcohol policy is lacking in Estonia. The writer gives a short overview of the problems associated with alcohol abuse and the current state of alcohol policy in Estonia and describes the method used in the study, the sample formation and the primary study findings. The goal of the study was to determine how civic associations see their role in impacting alcohol policy and whether contributing to the dialogue on alcohol policy is even among their priorities, and also what is the readiness on the part of state representatives for involving associations in shaping alcohol policy. The author reaches the conclusion that at the moment that the state and civic associations are caught in a loop where alcohol policy is concerned – civic associations expect the state to hold project competitions and invite them to alcohol policy discussions; and for its part the state is critical of civic associations for being passive and the state wants more of an active approach to be shown from below.

Injunctions and prohibitions are associated with the former occupation regime and are not acceptable to society. That is why opinion formation and education work is emphasized rather than prohibitive measures, which by their nature are more controversial.

The Civic Society Endowment

What sort of financing does the development of a civic society require?

Urmo Kübar, head of the Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations

Agu Laius, project manager, the Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations’ Civic Society Endowment

The Civic Society Endowment to be created on the basis of the initiative of voluntary associations will fill an important gap in the state financing of Estonian civic society, which to this point has not been very systematic. This endowment will be established in the legal form of a foundation and according to current plan, its activity will be headed by a ten-member council including, besides the Minister of Regional Affairs and representatives from the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Finance, 1-2 members of the Riigikogu and 4-5 representatives from associations in various fields. Based on the goal and the focus, the Civic Society Endowment will be both a grant-making and operational

foundation. Experiences with similar foundations in other states point to a number of dangers which may keep the new foundation from realizing its potential. Among other things, it should be borne in mind that the Civic Society Endowment would not become a state financing monopoly, which rather than accelerating the development of civil society could in fact turn out to curtail the process.

HISTORY OF THE PARLIAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Recent history

The Yeltsin phenomenon. Purely subjective recollections

Viktor Palm, Estonian Academy of Sciences academician, University of Tartu professor emeritus

As a persona, Boris Yeltsin was unique and indispensable. In his personal recollections, the writer deals with only the few episodes when his and Yeltsin's very different paths unexpectedly crossed or even converged. These crossed paths were in any case due to happenstance. The first instance was when, despite an initial decision not to run for member of the USSR's Congress of People's Deputies, the writer did not avoid being nominated. Once elected, he needed to gain some kind of understanding of the balance of power in the Congress and of the opportunities for cooperation. Not least, he had to decide how to view the two political titans and archrivals of the time, Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin. This difficult battle waged between the two ended with a brilliant victory for Yeltsin, but later Yeltsin, too, would end up on the losing end.

The writer met Yeltsin for the last time in a hallway, during an intermission for some event, where they exchanged a few words on the future of relations between Estonia and Russia. The writer expressed the opinion that in the future there would be many people in Estonia who would not have anything in their arsenal to sustain them besides Russophobia. A characteristic conspiratorial smile came on to Yeltsin's face and he said: "For such occasions, we have Zhirinovskiy to fall back on."

LITERATURE AND DATABASES

Services offered by parliament in the parliamentary libraries of Finland and Estonia

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In most countries, including Finland, the library of parliament is in the jurisdiction of the parliament, but in Estonia these functions are performed by the National Library. The parliamentary libraries of Finland and Estonia differ from each other significantly in terms of their history as well as their size and collections, but their purpose is one and the same – satisfying legislators' need for information. Both parliamentary libraries are characterized by the fact that the services they offer are constantly changing, because the needs of legislators change, too. Technology, especially the development of computer technology, forces libraries to remain in step with the times. An increasingly major part of information exchange has moved on to the Internet, and thus a large part of the relations with clients in the parliamentary service of both libraries are conducted through virtual channels.