

Summaries in English

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S COLUMN

A different kind of spring

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

For Estonia, spring 2007 has been extraordinary. For the first time in the last fifteen years, we felt that we could be facing serious domestic and foreign policy problems. In recent years, we have enjoyed the fruits of rapid economic growth, our standard of living has risen significantly, and we have been open and ready when it comes to implementing new technologies. A small but successful and stable country on the periphery of Europe – that was our image and that is the country we believed ourselves to be living in. Those who in recent years referred to the possibility that the progress would founder, that we were eye to eye with serious social problems and that we would need discussion on how to proceed, were disregarded. Politicians have always asserted that our success was lasting and if some sort of setback did occur, we would have a smooth fall.

We had forgotten that we live side by side with a considerable number of speakers of languages other than Estonian, with fellow citizens with a different mindset in many issues. These are citizens whose votes our politicians gladly vie for, but whose voices no one has actually listened to. In the wake of the events surrounding the removal of the Bronze Soldier, it has been claimed that our integration policy is a failure. Some demand a new policy in rapid order. But first we have to talk it through in Estonian society: what sort of integration are we ready for? It is a complete certainty that a large share of the non-Estonian speaking community will remain living in Estonia and is prepared to be loyal to the state if the state expresses itself and its demands clearly.

The foreign policy crisis that the removal of the statue provoked – which due to Russia's harsh response turned initially to our favour – represents a never-ending task for our diplomats. The trust that we have won on credit from Europe and the world over the years did indeed protect us in this particular situation, but it made us into a country with problems. Our image was spoiled.

The events of April showed, among other things, how little tolerance we have. People who expressed critical opinions of the government decision in the matter of the Bronze Soldier were labelled silly intellectuals or even anti-state. For a second it seemed that the right to think differently and speak a different opinion had been made illegal in Estonia. This was something that is to be opposed under any circumstance, because the right to hold an opinion is one of the basic tenets of democracy. I am very sorry that many politicians chose critical moments to be silent, as hypothetically in an even more critical situation, such politicians who opt for silence could doom the state.

This autumn will mark 15 years since the adoption of the fourth Constitution of the Republic of Estonia. This is the constitution under which Estonia became a parliamentary republic. Whereas the fathers of the Constitution tended to be concerned about power concentrated in the hands of the parliament, after fifteen years the reality has become different – and much worse. Parliament has become a rubber-stamp legislature for the executive power. It should be asked whether the parliament has any desire to assume the mantle that the Constitution bestows on it, and begin carrying out all of the functions vested in it. The freshly elected 11th Riigikogu should have a good chance to do so, as two-thirds of the deputies have experience in parliamentary work and politics: the parliament is made up of professional politicians.

It has been opined that everything is much clearer after the events of April. To me it seems it is the contrary, we are now clear on the fact that nothing is completely clear. Today we have to look in the

mirror and admit that we have many questions, but we do not have answers. They must be found. We should probably thank the Bronze Man for awakening us from our reverie of self-admiration.

ESSAY

Thanks to the Constitution

Märt Rask, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Estonia

The Constitution, which has been in force for fifteen years, is the fourth basic law in Estonia's nearly ninety years of statehood. It is a good time to consider: what we can thank our Constitution for? What has our statehood, our justice system, our individual liberties, become? One of the most important services of the implementation of the Constitution is certainly the fact that the Constitution started functioning as a legal act. For decades, constitutions of every stripe were considered anthologies of political declarations which lacked a link to real life and applicable law. Constitutional institutions comprised a set of instruments of public power which were supposed to function within the limits of a certain competence, defined by the constitution. Evidently it was a sign of the times that the content of the first constitutional supervision cases ruled on by the Supreme Court predominantly concerned disputes over the competence of state organs. In the course of these cases, the limits of the competence of the head of state, government and the parliament were specified. And although the entry into force of the constitution created the basis for a democratic state governed by the rule of law, on the popular level the idea of the supremacy of justice takes years if not generations to take root. The question of whether the people trust their own judgment and justice, or rather defer to whoever is in power, most likely depends strongly on the cultural background of a society. It is up to those who lead to choose whether they pursue the goal of enlightenment of the people or pandering to an unenlightened citizenry. In Estonia, thanks to the Constitution, the rule of law is a value that cannot be reversed.

POLITICAL FORUM

Cybersecurity

Blazing a trail to cybersecurity

Ene Ergma, President of the Riigikogu, Pro Patria and Res Publica Union

In the final days of April, Estonia fell victim to large-scale, centrally coordinated cyberattacks. The target chosen for the attacks was no less and no more than the entire electronic infrastructure of the state.

Estonia's electronic defence systems did and are doing an effective job at defending and repelling the attacks. None of the systems with key national importance (banks, state databases, state communications systems) was irreparably damaged. But since most public, government and business services in Estonia are electronic (97% of banking operations are conducted over the Internet in Estonia, and schools, defence, science, research and health care institutions and energy systems are also Internet-based, along with the government's administrative activity and external relations etc), the attacks directly or indirectly affected the security of each and every inhabitant, company, and the existence of Estonia as a modern and open 21st century country. There is reason enough to conclude that the cyberattacks, which began concurrently with Soviet-minded mobs rampaging through Tallinn at the end of April, is no mere coincidence but rather systematic, coordinated hostile activity.

The cyberattacks should be seen as an extremely great clear and present danger to democracies and peoples. Unfortunately cyber-war is no longer a topic of the distant future or an interesting theoretical problem. Democracies and societies that are developing openly are in a paradoxical situation, as both the European Union and NATO lack a cyber-defence policy and lack the legal framework –

international conventions and agreements – that would stipulate what could be done in actuality for practical defensive or preventive cooperation. We lack laws for prosecuting transgressors.

We must join forces in the European Union and other international organizations, including in the UN Security Council, to develop, as soon as possible, a global defensive and information security system for electronic infrastructure. This must become a foreign relations priority for the Riigikogu.

Riigikogu elections

Inter-electoral work determines the result

RiTo conversation circle

Riigikogu Toimetised invited politicians and political observers to take part in a discussion about the election of the 11th Riigikogu on 21 May and the campaign that preceded the elections. The participants in the conversation circle were Meelis Atonen (Reform Party), Mart Laar (Pro Patria and Res Publica Union), Eiki Nestor (Social Democratic Party) and Ain Seppik (Centre Party) as well as the political science scholar Anu Toots (Tallinn University) and media expert Tarmu Tammerk (Estonian correspondent for Agence France-Presse). The participants agreed that compared to the previous parliamentary elections, this time the election campaign was markedly more peaceable and cordial, yet also more commercial and costly. They did not condemn the commercialism as such, finding rather that if parties were able to better bring their ideas to the electorate by spending on advertising services, the campaign would be more substantial and professional. This undoubtedly also has an effect on how active voters are. Before the elections it was thought that participation would be very low this year, but the 62% turnout exceeded all forecasts. The politicians believed that the increasing popularity of online voting also played a role in raising the turnout, as it helps get out a larger youth vote. It was thus found that if Estonia wants to increase electoral participation, it will have to continue to deal with broadening opportunities for and popularizing early voting.

Riigikogu elections – in comparison with the world and neighbours

Rein Toomla, University of Tartu political science department, lecturer in international relations

Since restoration of independence, Estonia has had five general elections. This article analyzes the results of these elections and compares them to parliamentary elections held by three of Estonia's closest neighbours – Finland, Sweden and Latvia. The two most recent elections produced fairly similar results in Estonia: six parties made it into the Riigikogu, and the two most successful ones were fairly close to each other in terms of number of seats, while the third one came in a somewhat distant third. The position of the fourth party is distinct, but the other two are already close to the 5% threshold. This begs the question of whether we can talk of Estonia having a country-specific pattern for electoral results, one that would be characteristic of future elections as well. And also, whether it is at all possible that any country could develop a specific pattern that is unlike the ones in other countries?

Innovation policy

Success is ensured by development of the economic environment

Juhan Parts, Minister of Economic Affairs and Communications, Pro Patria and Res Publica Union

In the very big picture, it is near certain that the success of a country's economic development is determined by whether the country has a good economic climate. In this context, it is important that the government has a definite plan how to increase the competitiveness of Estonia's economy. According to the plan, the labour market has to be made more flexible, investment and saving must be

promoted, and the creative economy must be developed. It is necessary to ensure equal treatment for business people and fair competition, and to reduce corruption.

The Estonian economy has developed rapidly, on the strength of domestic demand and increases in foreign investments and trade. Its 11.4% growth in GDP in 2006 not only places Estonia first among European countries but makes it one of the world's fastest growing countries. The total employment rate has also seen noteworthy growth – by the end of 2006, unemployment had fallen to 5,9% and in places, joblessness had in places been supplanted by a shortage of workers.

In the near future, reorientation to become a supplier of knowledge-intensive products and services will be a serious challenge. To increase productivity and remain in competition, companies must make capital-intensive investments in the years ahead. It is thus important that state enterprise and innovation policy also focus on increasing export.

The government has set a goal of increasing spending on research and development and innovation to 2% of the gross domestic product by 2011 and to 3% by 2015. Half of the necessary funds will be covered by the state from the budget; the other half will be from investments. Estonia must invest a good deal more into ensuring that we have more university graduates with a technical higher education and that the creative potential of our inventors would be better realized in the form of protected patents.

Estonia is launching the Estonian Development Fund, modelled after Finland's Sitra, which will help modernize the economy.

Estonian Development Fund – on the road to the next economy

Erik Terk, *Estonian Institute of Future Studies, director, Estonian Development Fund, deputy chairman of the supervisory board*

The Estonian Development Fund, whose founding was governed by an act passed on 15 November 2006 by the Riigikogu, was in principle created to fulfil two functions: to help the state make long-term strategic decisions – fulfilling the so-called future monitoring function and supporting the financing of innovative, high-risk ideas. As of spring 2007, the basic operations for launching the fund have been completed. The activity of the Fund is based on legislation. The Fund is a legal person under public law, with a supervisory board. A director general was hired in a public competition, and other people are being hired incrementally. The primary tasks for the launch period have been agreed. Before the end of 2007, the precise work schedules must be completed and be discussed in the Fund supervisory board with regard to both development monitoring and organizing risk capital investments. The first major monitoring project has been launched, aimed at shaping the dynamics of Estonia's economic structure in order to derive the necessary measures for accelerating structural changes. Most of these are associated with decisions and initiatives related to educational policy and for financing education. Both the development monitoring and the risk capital aspects are fundamental goals.

CONSTITUTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The United Nations

The UN – a truly worldwide forum

Tiina Intelmann, *Permanent Representative of the Republic of Estonia to the UN in New York*

When diplomats are exhausted by the endless negotiations in the UN and reach their wit's end, it is a good time to remind ourselves that a roomful of exhausted diplomats is still far better than tens of

thousands of soldiers on the front lines. For a small state, the most important keyword is undoubtedly “international law”. In its 60 years of activity, dozens of conventions (plus numerous “protocols additional”) have been negotiated at the UN. These documents are in fact the only worldwide set of rules governing the behaviour of states in different walks of life. Even though compliance with these conventions is often a rocky affair, just imagine what would happen if there were no worldwide agreements or international oversight at all. The UN has had a major role in resolving regional and, recently, internal conflicts. In the future, when all of the regions in the world start coming to terms with their problems in a more peaceful fashion, only the truly global problems will remain in the UN’s province – climate change, sustainable development and mutual assistance for increasingly frequent natural disasters. For instance, emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere must be slowed through a number of measures, and this will require cooperation between all of the countries in the world.

Darfur: What really lies behind the Darfur humanitarian disaster

Mart Nutt, member of the Riigikogu, Pro Patria and Res Publica Union

The Darfur humanitarian disaster has cast a shadow on the beginning of the 21st century and third millennium. If there is goodwill, it could be resolved overnight; or it could drag on for decades as the case has been with the civil war in southern Sudan.

According to the official version put out by the Sudanese government, it is a run-of-the-mill tribal conflict – African land-tilling tribes and nomadic herders of Arab descent came to blows in 2003 over fertile lands. Unfortunately, the figures that have reached the public through the UNHCR, Red Cross and Darfur refugees tell a different story. The conflict re-intensified suddenly in 2006. In December of last year, the UN human rights council decided to form a high-level expert mission to investigate the situation and present their report and proposals on what to do next. The writer of this article was the only expert from Europe on this mission.

By February 2004, the Sudanese government had changed its position regarding the UN mission and on various pretexts the Sudanese representation in Geneva would not issue visas to mission members (nor would the embassy in Addis Ababa) and the mission did not make it to Darfur. Operating on the mandate of the UN Human Rights Council, the mission visited the headquarters of the African Union seated in Addis Ababa and the camps for the Darfurian refugees in eastern Chad. On 16 March 2007, the report was presented to the UN Human Rights Council.

The picture that developed regarding Darfur’s problems during the mission’s work is markedly different from the official Sudanese version. Darfur can be considered a case of a conflict between newer Arab settlers and indigenous inhabitants (with the government clearly favouring the settlers, if not to say goading them on) as well as a case of government interest in getting control of the tribal lands currently held by the land-tilling tribes. Here we start to see why the Sudanese government did not wish to see a high-level UN mission in Darfur. This is no religious war, since Darfur is Islamic. Yes, there were complaints about racist statements from the Arab side. But the most credible reasons seem to be economic reasons. Southern Sudan is rich in oil, and Darfur is thought to be similarly well-endowed in natural resources. It seems that the Sudanese government is holding the solution to the Darfur humanitarian disaster. But they are not ready to resolve the problem using political means. And so the bloodshed continues.

There is no trust in the African Union peacekeeping forces. The strong intervention of the UN is awaited. Will it come? Time will tell.

STUDIES AND OPINIONS

Innovation

Planning innovation policy in Estonia

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

Estonia's innovation policy was designed to be centred on the state, but the state has not been a very active leader. It can even be argued that the state has abandoned its leadership role.

The surfeit of strategy documents, activity plans, programmes and projects is typical. The strategies do not form a harmonious system.

Confusion, disorganization and inconsistency have thus reigned in innovation policy planning. Consensus has not been achieved in identifying and describing the problem. We are not seeing clarity of thought and consistency in the thought process, and the articulating and documenting of objectives.

It is not possible to say what technology is planned for implementing innovation policy and achieving the set goals. Thus it is not possible to evaluate effectiveness or forecast the likelihood of achieving the set goals.

Based on several studies, it can be argued that, as to the various requirements for being a brilliant success story in innovation and innovation policy, Estonia will fall short in the following areas: people with an inborn head for business and business worldview, cultural background to support innovation, domestic financing capability, a big enough market to serve as an incentive for foreign financiers, the necessary number of educated people and talented scientists, the ability to protect intellectual property and the administrative environment, including sufficient legal and tax-related support. Estonia's general innovative capacity is limited. Many of the reasons are objective, but the subjective factor is not insignificant.

The requirement for success is a well-thought-out and worded set of activities that is backed up by resources, supporting creativity, inspired thinking and openness in all social strata – and the freedom to enable all this.

All strategy documents should be inventoried and catalogued. The timeliness and content of each individual strategy should be evaluated; documents that serve no specific purpose should be invalidated; a hierarchy of strategic documents should be set up; conflicts within documents and impacts should be analyzed; and a systematic strategic planning model should be developed.

The tax base

Income tax as a revenue source for Estonia's local governments: practical problems

Mikk Lõhmus, Tallinn University of Technology Regional Policy Chair, lecturer, PhD candidate
Urmas Koidu, head of the Indirect Taxes Division of the Ministry of Finance, Tallinn University master's degree candidate

The necessary tax base for ensuring quality public services and the inseparably connected issue of income tax revenue are among the key problems of Estonian local governments. Because income tax is the biggest source of income for local governments (accounting for 43% of local budgetary revenue in 2006) issues related to this tax are as salient as they can be. As the analysis by the authors of this article shows, Estonia's recent economic growth has left an effect on the revenue base of local governments, primarily on income tax receipts. The analysis also showed that despite vigorous development in the poorer counties, regional disparities in income persist, pointing among other things to the need to reform the local government budget equalization fund. Another thing to consider is that in the general climate of economic growth, an increasing number of taxpayers are able to allow

themselves to make tax deductions. Due to this fact, the authors propose the setting of an income level, beyond which deductions are not permitted.

Social policy

Special pensions – a threat to social justice or a motivator for civil servants?

Lauri Leppik, Tallinn University, professor

Estonian legislation prescribes special pensions for the following categories of officials: police officials, military officials, border guards, judges, prosecutors, chancellor of justice, officials of the state audit and the President. Other civil servants are paid supplements to their regular state old age pension, depending on the length of civil service. Special pensions remain a controversial component of the Estonian pension system. These pensions have been established by the legislature with the underlying idea of creating a stable and loyal civil service. At the same time, the system of special pensions does not harmonize with the new multi-pillar structure of the Estonian pension system. Broadly, the dissonance relates to the fact that all special pensions are defined-benefit type pension schemes, pensions being calculated as a fixed percentage of the former salary, whereas the first and the second pillars of the Estonian new pension system follow a defined-contribution principle. Compared to ordinary old age pensions, special pensions are rather generous. The median special pension is about 2.3 times higher than the median old age pension. This has led the media and the broader public to perceive special pensions as unjust. The system of special pensions is also very fragmented. For each category of officials the rules of acquiring pension rights, statutory replacement rates and accrual rates are somewhat different. The number of recipients of special pensions has increased from 113 in 2000 to 1,678 in 2006, while the schemes are still in early stage of maturation. It is advisable to re-arrange the existing system of special pensions, creating a unified supplementary scheme for specified groups of civil servants and officials, which should harmonize better with the main pillars of the Estonian pension system.

Social welfare system – only half a solution to the problems

Andres Siplane, Tallinn University PhD candidate

The purpose of the article is to analyze the social welfare system in the light of general system theory.

One of the important traits of any system is that, as the elements are integrated into the system, there will appear some new characteristics that we do not find when we observe the elements one by one. The same applies when we observe social workers separately and when we observe the systems that they form.

When social workers are integrated into a system they exchange some of their personal traits for those of the system. Some of the new traits would be the wish to maintain jobs and the organization, financial and legislative constraints, instability that comes from the employee turnover, alienation from the results of the work and also path-dependency when designing appropriate services.

The article will not offer some magic solutions to those problems because they are present in all kind of bureaucracies. But we should be aware of those inclinations and consider them when designing social policy.

The effect of cash support to families on alleviating poverty in Estonia

Andres Võrk, PRAXIS Center for Policy Studies, analyst, University of Tartu Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, research fellow

Alari Paulus, University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research

The article analyzes the role of cash benefits and tax concessions on reducing poverty in Estonia aimed at families with children. The PRAXIS Center for Policy Studies tax-benefit microsimulation model was used. This allows the effect of actual and hypothetical policies on income distribution and poverty to be evaluated. It also enables a more detailed examination of policy instruments than is possible with survey information only. The model examined benefits paid on the basis of the State Family Benefits Act and the Parental Benefit Act, as well as the additional tax allowance related to the number of dependant children prescribed by the Income Tax Act.

To sum up, the analysis showed that from 2000-2005, state family benefits, parental benefit and additional tax allowance reduced the number of children living below the relative poverty line by almost one-third (about 20,000 children) – a drop of 10 percentage points. Benefits have resulted in the greatest reduction in poverty among families with three or more children. The benefits targeted to these families are also the ones which reach the poor to the greatest extent and are the most cost-effective in reducing poverty.

The static microsimulation method applied proves its value in comparing policy measures especially if we are interested in their first-order effect on poverty and redistribution of wealth. This should assist policy planners in taking socio-political decisions aimed at families.

In order to obtain a more comprehensive analysis, the next step should be to evaluate the effect of family benefits on job market behaviour and birth rates. In the last few years, the parental benefit and additional income tax allowance have increased as a percentage of the cash benefits aimed at families, and under the coalition agreement signed in early 2007 it should increase even further. The analysis reveals that the parental benefit and the additional tax-free income on the second child and especially on the first child are relatively costly measures when it comes to reducing poverty among families with children. Thus, in order to evaluate whether larger expenditures on these measures are expedient, it is necessary to analyze additionally the expected positive influence of these measures on the behaviour of parents on the job market and the birth rate, compared to non means-tested universal family benefits.

The national defence

The political debate over the national defence and public opinion in Estonia

Juhan Kivirühk, senior research fellow, *International Centre for Defence Studies*

In the run-up to NATO accession there was consensus among political parties when it came to Estonian foreign and security policy. Now that Estonia is a member of the organization, however, political discussion has arisen concerning the various alternatives and opportunities for guaranteeing national security.

Opposition from the previous Defence Minister and Commander of the Defence Forces raised the issue of how control over the national defence should be regulated by law. At the opening session of the 11th Riigikogu, the President of the Republic proposed that the Constitution be amended by removing the Commander of the Defence Forces from the list of constitutional institutions.

The various differences are not only due to the different views of parties and a handful of politicians regarding how the national defence should be organized. The various defence concepts reflect a collision between different paradigms – modernist visions of a nation-state and post-modern-individualist – in Estonian society.

The participants in the national defence debate disagree about what will ultimately guarantee Estonia security – NATO or Estonia's own capabilities – and also about whether Estonia requires a

conscription-based or professional military. The article cites relevant opinions published in the press in the last two years and provides results of public opinion surveys conducted on these issues.

The public feels that national defence should not be a top-priority issue for the government, as a military threat to Estonia is considered unlikely. Environmental issues like pollution or a potential explosion aboard a train carrying oil products are considered more clear and present dangers. Public opinion considers the most secure guarantee of Estonian security to be membership of NATO; this has the support of three-fourths of the population.

But at the same time, almost 90% of the population considers it necessary for young men to undergo military service and 63% take a negative view of draft-dodging. Two-thirds of the population express readiness to take part personally in defence activity if Estonia were to be attacked. And 75% of the respondents consider it necessary for young males unsuitable for the military to be called up for alternative service.

More than three-fourths of the public considers it suitable for the current national defence system to continue – a professional military exists in combination with compulsory conscription.

Estonia's strategy for the future, entitled "Sustainable Estonia 21", contains thoroughly weighed proposals on how to continue to function sustainably as a society. According to the strategy, neither continuing the current "invisible hand" policy, which cultivates individualism and declares economic well-being to be an absolute, or replacing it with a neoconservative policy that puts society's general interests above everything else, would have prospects.

Individual liberty and social needs should not be placed in strict opposition to each other. These are opposite poles of the same axis, and for every given social situation, there is an optimal midpoint between these poles. A paradigm change must progress constructively, drawing on society's full knowledge potential, not starting to destroy existing structures before it is clear what they should be replaced with.

The Riigikogu

The use of steamroller tactics in state budget discussions, 1998–2005

Erkki Tori, Ministry of Defence, Public Relations Office adviser

Coalition parties in the Estonian parliament have been accused on numerous occasions of using so-called steamroller tactics to push through their bills or amendments while pushing aside the bills or amendments of opposition parties without any debate. The aim of this article is to provide an assessment of whether steamroller tactics have actually been used in the Estonian parliament.

To fulfil this goal, eight different state budgets (years 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005) are studied. During the drafting of these state budgets four different governments held office and thus there were four different coalitions in the Estonian parliament. Two of the governments were majority governments – those of Mart Laar (between the years 1999–2002) and Juhan Parts (between the years 2003–2005) – and two were minority governments – those of Mart Siimann (between the years 1997–1999) and Siim Kallas (between the years 2002–2003). Analysis focuses on how many amendments were made by the coalitions and the oppositions separately during the drafting of these budgets. This makes it possible to measure the difference between the so-called success rate of coalition and opposition amendments. If a large difference is detected, it is possible to say that steamroller tactics have been used during the drafting of the state budget.

If it becomes apparent that there have been instances of steamroller tactics in the Estonian parliament, further analysis is needed. It is not possible to determine through the use of the quantitative method

whether opposition parties may have knowingly proposed a large number of amendments to be taken into consideration. To assess this possibility, the number of amendments made by opposition parties is divided by the number of mandates each opposition party has had in the parliament. It is thus possible to see if the results vary between different opposition parties and different years, and recognize any potential anomalies.

Third, different coalitions are analysed in the article. As minority governments cannot technically use steamroller tactics (they do not have the necessary majority) an analysis was performed to find out whether there is a difference between the success rate of opposition amendments during majority and minority governments.

The findings of the analysis confirm that steamroller tactics have indeed been used in the Estonian parliament during the drafting of budgets for the years 2000–2005. The analysis of minority/majority governments supports the claim that steamroller tactics have been used and even by a minority government (during the drafting of the state budget for the year 2003). The analysis of the number of amendments put forward by the opposition and the number of mandates held by opposition parties in the parliament point to an anomaly – during the drafting of the state budget for years 2001 and 2002 the Estonian People's Union introduced an unusually large number of amendments.

Public administration

The ethics of public service in Estonia

Aive Pevkur, State Chancellery, Public Service Department adviser

In 2005–2006 a study commissioned by the State Chancellery was conducted in Estonia, entitled “Roles and attitudes in public service”. The report is available on the State Chancellery's Public Service page. The goal of the study was to gain a broad-based overview of what values are important to public servants, where are the primary ethical bottlenecks in the public servant sphere, what sort of behaviour is condemned, and what means of promoting ethics are desirable. The most important conclusion drawn by the study is that Estonian officials are ethical and accept the position that public servants should be subject to higher ethical requirements than employees in the private sector. At the same time, focus group interviews organized during the study showed that officials are not used to viewing many problems conventionally considered ethics issues as such – they tend to consider them organizational or related to public service. Thus people do not think to utilize ethics-related approach in resolving such problems.

Assessment of administrative burdens – a step towards better regulation

Anneli Sihver, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Economic Development Department, Enterprise Division, chief specialist

During recent years the necessity of reducing administrative burdens has been high on the agenda as one topic of the Lisbon Strategy. The aim of the measurement and reduction of administrative burdens is to simplify the fulfilment of reporting requirements for entrepreneurs. As a result the time spent on administrative obligations will decrease and the competitiveness of the SMEs will increase.

A standard cost model methodology was developed in the Netherlands in order to calculate how much time and money is spent on administrative procedures by businesses. At present the methodology is applied in many member states of the EU, including Estonia. Some of the countries (e.g. United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Denmark) have measured administrative burdens for all legislative acts and determined the quantitative reduction target together with simplification plans. On the EU level, the European Commission has also proposed that member states cooperate with the Commission in the measurement of EU legislation.

Although Estonian Government has suggested that ministries find out the necessity for the administrative burden measurements, the practice has been rather modest. So far the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications has conducted four studies and developed a guideline on application of standard cost model methodology in Estonia. For Estonia the main challenges are related to availability of resources – on the one hand administrative burden assessments are not systematically integrated with the process of law-drafting. On the other hand the practice on assessment of administrative burden is insufficient among officials in different ministries. Still, the improvement of the situation could be expected since the development of impact assessment system in general is included in the Government Coalition Agreement as well as in the framework of the EU structural funds.

Population policy

Population policy towards sustainable development

Kalev Katus, demographer

Since the end of the Cold War, cooperation has made a comeback in Europe, and in the field of population, cooperation between states has been taking place already for more than 15 years. Pan-European intergovernmental conferences (Geneva 1993, Budapest 1998, Geneva 2004 and Strasbourg 2005) have, after serious discussion and on the basis of consensus, defined Europe's primary problems on population development. One of these is (very) low fertility. All European countries with the exception of Turkey have under-replacement fertility, an average of only 65-75% of that level. The rest of the world is looking at what kind of (political) restructuring must and can be done to ensure population sustainability, as the current situation in Europe will become everyone else's future very quickly.

The article provides a short overview of Estonian fertility through the general indicator – total fertility rate – in order to treat the aspect of which principles could be implemented for a pro-growth policy and which should be discouraged. From the aspect of policy, Estonia comes with little baggage and so the experience of others will be important. At present, the experiences have above all been negative, but avoiding mistakes is a big accomplishment in itself. The principles of unsuccessful policy can be generalized into three approaches: a money-centred model, independent set of measures, and non-guaranteed duration. It would be wise not to rely on these principles in planning either population policy or, more narrowly, fertility policy.

The opportunities for successful policy are also generalized into three approaches, of which the most important, and the one that can be brought to life most rapidly, is developing the knowledge base. As the first step of a successful fertility policy, it would be wise to create national statistics and to transform the Statistical Office into a socially conscious and statistically competent institution. Following this administrative step, we can proceed to creating the necessary databases – above all through becoming part of the cooperation programmes in Europe – so that our next step would be to attain population-centred planning that has the entire society in mind and, more specifically, start aiming at the replacement level.

CIVIC SOCIETY AND STATE AUTHORITY

Civic society and the state

Partnership between public authority and civic initiative: factors that affect cooperation

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A systematic overview of the Estonian public sector and citizen's associations is lacking. In the article we present a summary of the primary findings of the study entitled "Complementary relations between public authority and civic initiative", based on analysis of data from a questionnaire-based survey organized in the framework of a study entitled "Roles and attitudes in the public service" and four case studies conducted in autumn 2006. On the basis of the findings it can be asserted that cooperation between civic associations and public servants in Estonia's public sector is taking place, although right now less than half (44%) of the civil servants have experience with cooperation and only one-sixth of them are involved in regular ongoing cooperation. If the goal is to make cooperation more effective, a number of issues should receive further study. For example, regional differences are to be noted in the cooperation between civil servants and civic associations. Cross-referencing these more thoroughly with the socioeconomic, cultural and political special character of these counties may prove fruitful in identifying factors that hinder cooperation as well as the factors that promote it.

Civic society and sustainable Estonia

Olav Aarna, Estonian Business School, adjunct professor

If we compare the opportunities afforded by the Estonian Civic Society Development Concept (Estonian acronym – EKAK), approved by the Riigikogu in 2002, to the development strategy entitled Sustainable Estonia 21, approved three years later by the same body, it should not be overlooked that the implementing mechanisms are very different. The Civic Society Development Concept stipulated what the Government and the Riigikogu, along with representatives of the civic associations, should do to implement it. On the other hand, the sustainable development strategy – which does not specify precise functions, timetable or cost – does not impose any obligations on anyone to deal with it further, in spite of the fact that it, too, received approval from the Riigikogu. Here there is a serious danger that Sustainable Estonia 21 will remain yet another strategy to be filed away on a shelf, predestined to fail. Estonia's development will continue to be guided above all by short-term political agreements. Evidently the implementation of the strategy will require a totally different type of culture of governance than the one practiced in Estonia. It will require a truly knowledge-based type of state governance based on an extensive cooperative network between state structures, specialists and civic associations.

HISTORY OF THE PARLIAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

World affairs

Charter 77 and the Baltic Sea Union – two good examples of "resistance the Czech way"

Iivi Zújedová, PhD, Baltic Sea Union member, founding member of the Czech-Estonian Club

A number of resistance groups arose in 1970s Czechoslovakia. Two of the groups contributed in one way or another to the restoration of Estonian independence. The internationally best-known group was Charter 77, the political goal of which was to restore civic society, democracy and the rule of law. The emergence of Charter 77 on the political horizon was a radical challenge to the totalitarian communist regime and marked a new beginning in the development of Czechoslovakia after the quashing of the 1968 reform movement. The other opposition group worth mentioning was the Baltic Sea Union in Prague, which started out as a strictly illegal organization. It is special for the support this small organization gave to the people of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Thanks to the activity of the Baltic Sea Union, the publication of books translated from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in Prague gained momentum and as a result these nations became better known in Czechoslovakia. Today both these organizations have lost their importance they had, but most of the members of both groups are still

active to the present day in various areas. In the case of the Baltic Sea Union members, this first and foremost concerns all things Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian.

History of legislation

The Pärnoja amendment and the threat to the stability of the kroon

Uno Mereste, Estonian Academy of Sciences academician, member of the 7th, 8th and 9th Riigikogu

Even though it seemed, after the Eesti Pank Act was adopted in 1993, that the central bank was guaranteed for all time the ability to follow an independent monetary policy free of the government, this sense of security proved premature. Already at the end of the same year, the Riigikogu embarked on an attempt to strip Eesti Pank of its functional capacity in ensuring the stability of the kroon. Namely, the chairman of the Moderates faction, Mihkel Pärnoja, proposed at a meeting of the finance committee – then known as the budget and taxation committee – to merge the Eesti Pank budget with the state budget. This would effectively have meant that the central bank would fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance, which would perform oversight over its revenue and expenditures. The Pärnoja amendment was a big disappointment to many members of the Riigikogu who had invested a personal stake in laying the groundwork for Estonia's economic development through a stable monetary system. This bitterness of course dissipated as soon as the Pärnoja amendment was defeated by a solid majority. Despite this – yet another attempt to strip the central bank's independence of its substance – the Riigikogu was able to stand up in its defence, demonstrating expertise and balance in its monetary policy, as it had on many previous occasions as well.

LITERATURE AND DATABASES

Alternatives for updating Estonian EU communication policy

Õnne Mets, Information specialist of the EU Information Centre at the National Library

The article argues that the Estonian EU information network should be updated in order to create synergy between information networks coordinated by Estonia and the EU. For this purpose, three alternative starting points are proposed: Estonian EU information network could contribute to development of civic society, making the EU more understandable for the public and getting the parliament involved. In a word, the network could contribute to the development of the Estonian public sphere.

The article highlights the need to give to the coordinating body of the network (i.e. EU Information Unit at State Chancellery) the power of decision concerning the network. Alternative locations of network members are also discussed: central libraries, other existing networks (e.g. Enterprise Estonia's regional offices), and local or county governments.

In order to put the national EU information network into the service of two-way communication, the author suggests giving more attention to stakeholders. The following are discussed as the most important alternative stakeholders: the Riigikogu's European Union Affairs Committee, the European Union Secretariat at State Chancellery, public relations officials at ministries, representations of European Commission and European Parliament and journalists. These stakeholders could provide interpretation of the EU topic and could use the feedback in policy-making process.

The Estonian Research Information System (ETIS) as a resource for scholars and source of information for the public

Siret Linde, Tallinn University research and development specialist

The goal of the national research information system was to consolidate Estonian R&D databases into one body of knowledge. Previously Estonia had lacked a central system for recording research data and each institution kept its data separate, not allowing public access to them. The new information system consists of the Estonian Research Portal (www.etis.ee) and a personal desktop for each user (requires authorization). The research and development data for public use are available in English as well and use is free of charge. Anyone who is interested can keep themselves up to date with events in the research and development sphere by using the portal's news and calendar heading. They can also express their opinion in the forum and learn about what other researchers are working on. Special emphasis is assigned to the system for confirming the data which ensures reliability and quality of all of the information.