

Summaries in English

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S COLUMN

Landmark

Helle Ruusing, Editor-in-Chief of the Riigikogu Toimetised, Information Adviser of the Information Service of the Chancellery of the Riigikogu

On 1 January 2011, Estonia will adopt the euro. It is a sign of the development of our economy during the last two decades. Although the efforts made for fulfilment of the formal criteria of the euro deserve recognition, with the benefit of hindsight it can be said that the preparation begun much earlier. Likewise, no politician or government can say that the euro is their merit. It is the Estonian people who deserve credit for that. We are one of the poorest in the “euro club” at present but we can rely on Estonians’ tenacity and diligence – they will do everything to raise their rating. The euro is a landmark which has been achieved with a great effort and from which something new will be born.

Estonia will elect a new parliament in March 2011. In the nineties, nobody doubted the necessity of the work of the parliament but nowadays it is often asked: what do we need the Riigikogu for? Hopefully this question reflects dissatisfaction with a specific composition of the Riigikogu or politician and not a doubt of the necessity of representative democracy. Political parties have become remarkably stronger in Estonia and it is often they who determine the issues that are discussed before the elections and the politicians who stand as candidates in the elections. Often, a representative of the people is first of all connected with a political party and depends more on his or her party than on his or her electors. Such a situation weakens the parliament; a weak parliament opens the door ajar for undemocratic governance. Estonia is a parliamentary republic and the Constitution grants the Riigikogu an important role in the society. The representatives of the people who will be elected to the XII Riigikogu should be able to give a more powerful content to this role.

In recent history of Estonia, dozens of significant landmarks can be found; we have been in constant change and so far we have been successful in following this path. This turn of the year, the time of the Estonian kroon, which has been an important symbol of independence for us alongside with our flag, our coat of arms and our anthem, is over. As a member state of the European Union, we should have the same attitude towards the euro as we used to have towards our own currency. So – good bye, kroon; welcome, euro!

ESSAY

Medicine and limits to human existence

Andres Soosaar, Editor-in-chief of the medical professional magazine Eesti Arst

The main objective of medicine is to stop the suffering of patients or, in certain cases, at least to alleviate it. However, the impact of medicine on the unfolding of a human life manifests itself in a considerably wider perspective than solely by restoring the normalcy of life opportunities of a particular person. Medicine holds the means to continue expanding the limits of human existence as we know them today. This becomes particularly evident when new treatment and diagnostics methods allow us to shift the beginning and the end of human life on the temporal axis. Intensive care and *in vitro* fertilisation have made human life possible in situations where it would be completely impossible without the help of medicine. Yet all these and other means that allow modern medicine to dramatically interfere with human existence cannot be used indiscriminately. Among other considerations, their correspondence to the recognised principles of medical

ethics must always be taken into account. Medical care and research are inextricably linked with ethics and values, which is why the impact of medicine and its new practices on human existence constantly draws attention. The two arguments in medical ethics that often contrast in one way or another are the conservative “nature’s way” argument and the “justifiable benefits” argument; the compromise between these two can be ensured by subjecting the cases at hand to a meticulous social control. Public discussion on the simpler as well as the more complex medical ethics issues in Estonia has been largely insufficient and rather sporadic. One of the internationally tried and tested ways would be a much wider involvement of the Estonian Council of Bioethics, as the national ethics council, into raising, discussing and solving these issues, and increasing public awareness.

POLITICAL FORUM

Riigikogu

The changed role of the Riigikogu

RiTo conversation circle

In *Riigikogu Toimetised* conversation circle on 22 November, four Members of the Riigikogu discussed the development of the Estonian Parliament during the last two decades. The circle was attended by President of the Riigikogu Ene Ergma (Pro Patria and Res Publica Union) and the second Vice-President Jüri Ratas (Estonian Centre Party) and Members of the Riigikogu Eiki Nestor (Social Democratic Party) and Rain Rosimannus (Estonian Reform Party). *Riigikogu Toimetised* Editor-in-Chief Helle Ruusing acted as the moderator and compiled a summary of the discussion.

When answering the question as to how the Parliament of Estonia has changed during the last 20 years, the participants in the circle pointed out that the current Riigikogu no longer needs to do such long working days every week as in the beginning of the 1990s because the state is much more “ready” when compared to that period. However, the position of the parliament in the society and the attitude of the people towards legislators have changed with time. Participants in the circle stated that, after the restoration of the independence, nobody had put in doubt the need for the parliament. At that time, it was clear for everyone that the state had to have its own legislative body who would rebuild the legislative space of Estonia. Today, good words are rarely heard about the Riigikogu and the Riigikogu tends to become marginalised in comparison to the executive power. This is of course no peculiarity of Estonia, as the participants in the circle asserted. The same has happened in nearly most of the parliamentary democracies and all solutions that have been offered to change this are unpopular. The parliament is an organisation and, obviously, it depends to a great degree on every member of the parliament how it looks to bystanders. Certainly, electors often set too high requirements for the Riigikogu as if they were expecting it to raise deep discussions with a very long perspective and to tell what Estonia’s own great achievement might be, like Nokia is for Finns. To hope that the parliament begins to invent some fantastically useful things for the state and the people is of course strange, to put it mildly, in the opinion of the participants in the circle. It was not the Finnish parliament who came up with Nokia in Finland, at that matter. However, with its activities, the parliament has to create in Estonia an environment in which this “Nokia” can be born.

Amendment of the Constitution

Why the Constitution needs reorganising

Rait Maruste, Judge of the European Court of Human Rights, Visiting Professor at the University of Tartu

With all due respect to the authors of the Estonian Constitution who once wrote it, the author of this article considers this Act a positively dilettantish and outdated text which requires revision and reorganisation with a fresh eye. The phrase “reorganisation” has been selected knowingly here because Estonia does not need a new constitutional order in a broad sense. If we needed a new political and constitutional organisation, a new Constitution should be adopted. Actually, the existing basic scheme of statehood of Estonia, that is, the parliamentary republic, has justified itself well in time. Estonia has achieved development success and the statehood has been stable. At the same time, the political and legal integration of the state into the international life, including the accession to the European Union, has fundamentally changed our legal status. However, if we ask how much the text of the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia reflects this situation then the answer is: not at all. In summary, the author reaches the conclusion that if Estonia sticks to its current Constitution for longer, then the constitutional patterns fixed in it will be ingrained and petrified even deeper and it will be even more difficult to change them or give them a new content later. Moreover, reorganisation of the Constitution together with the accompanying discussions and disputes would give an important reason and impetus to reflect on the present and future of Estonia so that it will be better, more secure and make people happier.

How and where to proceed with the Constitution

Jüri Adams, Member of the Constitutional Assembly, Member of the 7th–9th Riigikogu

The author of this article does not support Rait Maruste’s proposal to start a thorough revision of the Estonian Constitution adopted by a referendum eighteen and a half years ago. Although many reforms and changes that could not be foreseen at the time the Constitution was drawn up have taken place in Estonia, the author, unlike Maruste, thinks it would be best to just delete the places causing excessive confusion from the text of the Constitution. If a new constitution were to be drawn up, the main concern would be that no matter in which form it would be done or who would do it, it would not only open a political discussion on all statehood solutions but also end the little domestic peace Estonia has so far managed to keep in citizenship, language and other sensitive issues. There is no doubt that all organisations and powers who are interested in replacing the existing bases of the state of Estonia by different citizenship and language regulations will see it as the best opportunity to develop their political programme. Therefore it is recommended to all who are considering similar plans to adopt the principle of one organisational amendment at a time in updating the Constitution.

The Constitution is not for playing with

Väino Linde, Chairman of the Constitutional Committee of the Riigikogu, Estonian Reform Party

The author stresses that although, at first glance, the Estonian Constitution and the real life are no longer moving at the same pace in many regards, we do not have to throw our Constitution to the dustbin with shame in the light of this knowledge. In fact, Estonia has one of the most contemporary constitutions in Europe which has nicely endured the eighteen years so important for the development of our state. However, there are those who believe that it is time to begin to prepare a new text of the Constitution. A main argument of the supporters of the new Constitution is the statement that when the current text was written eighteen years ago no one knew exactly where Estonia would be today and that is the reason why the Constitution needs to be changed now due to the political development which has occurred within the state as well as elsewhere in the world. A weighty objection, however, is that the political life does not stand still nowadays, either, but it keeps developing. It is hard to imagine what changes Estonia or the European Union will see for example in the nearest decades. The fundamental

principles and stability of our current Constitution may then well be the only reference points in which we will be able to find support to protect our statehood. Thus, Estonia has no need to start amending the Constitution light-handedly or to write a new text for it because the current Constitution is sufficiently abstract and flexible in its essence. Therefore we can continue to interpret and give a coherent content to the principles and positions set out therein, in line with the continuing democratic development of the life of the society.

Public opinion

Why public opinion polls are necessary

Juhan Kivirähk, sociologist, International Centre for Defence Studies

Research has shown that the positions of politicians and journalists influence the opinion of voters more than pre-election public opinion polls. At the same time, the so-called tactical election behaviour where the voters take the results of polls into account in forming their election preferences does not show the weakness, but the strength of democracy. At the elections the voter should be able to use all available information in order to decide which political power best represents him or her. The knowledge about the support of political forces among other voters can also be considered such information. Thus, it can be said in conclusion that pre-election public opinion polls are certainly necessary. And in spite of the scepticism that is sometimes demonstrated before the public, the political parties actually have no doubts about it but even order additional polls, so that they could set targets for election campaigns better. But public opinion polls also have an important role for the voters. The results of polls can fulfil that role if at their presentation it is known how much the polling results can be extended to reality, and if the facts that were revealed by the polls are kept apart from the fantasy of the interpreters of those facts. If that can be achieved, the public opinion polls contribute to the democracy of elections and more carefully planned decision-making at elections.

CONSTITUTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Turkish Constitution reform

Constitution reforms pave Turkey's way to Europe

Janek Laidvee, Adviser/Head of Secretariat of the Constitutional Committee of the Riigikogu

At the referendum in Turkey on 12 September 2010, nearly 58 per cent of Turkish citizens who voted approved the constitutional amendments package which will modernise the Constitution of Turkey. The Constitutional Committee of the Estonian parliament (the Riigikogu) went on a visit to Turkish parliament in May 2010, immediately after the parliament had passed the Bill on Amendments to the Constitution and sent it to a referendum. At the meetings with members of the Constitution committee, the committee on inspection of human rights and the gender equality committee of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, the Constitutional Committee of the Riigikogu had an opportunity to obtain information about the background of the Constitution reform from the direct source and to share Estonia's experience in building a democratic state based on the rule of law. The changes relating to the reform of the 12th September can be divided into two groups: the first one concerns better protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms and, the second one, reforming of the state based on the rule of law and of the judicial system. An important amendment to the Constitution is the establishing of the institution of Ombudsman as well as ensuring the opportunity for citizens to have

recourse directly to the Constitutional Court in case of violation of the fundamental rights. Several amendments address directly the problem points of Turkish democracy. The jurisdiction of military courts is restricted and disputes related to military service are left for them to resolve. In other respects, cases would be adjudicated in general courts. Time will show if these changes are enough to bring Turkey out of the political and constitutional crisis which the state is experiencing in the opinion of some experts.

STUDIES AND OPINIONS

Local governments

*Ensuring the financial autonomy of Estonian municipalities**

Janno Reiljan, Tenured Professor of Foreign Economics, University of Tartu

Kadi Timpmann, Doctoral Student, University of Tartu

This article intends to evaluate the extent of revenue autonomy of local governments in Estonia and to offer opportunities to increase it. In order to effectively perform the duties assigned to them by law, local governments need to have adequate revenues. The authority which local governments have in determining the level and structure of their expenditures is highly dependent on the nature of their revenue sources. Revenue autonomy and accountability of local governments are best guaranteed through municipalities' own revenues, i.e. local taxes, user charges and revenues from local property.

According to theory, property tax is the most suitable local tax. However, revenues from property tax and from user charges are rarely large enough to cover the expenditure needs of municipalities. Therefore, it may be necessary to grant local governments access to some broadly based taxes. In terms of administrative and tax export avoidance considerations, the best option would be to let local governments set a fixed rate surcharge on top of the central personal income tax.

In Estonia, municipal own revenues are comprised of land tax, local taxes, revenues from the sale of goods and services and revenues from assets (except revenues from non-produced fixed assets). These own revenue sources constitute only 15% of total revenues in Estonian municipalities on average. Hence, Estonian municipalities are almost fully dependent on central government transfers in the form of shared taxes or grants.

The easiest way to increase municipal own revenues in Estonia is to replace the current system of income tax sharing by a system of local surcharges to the central personal income tax. If municipalities were allowed to gain the same amount of revenues from setting surcharges as they get from tax sharing at present, then the share of own resources of Estonian municipalities would increase to more than half of their total revenues on average.

The Estonian local government reform of the end of the 1930s in the light of the local government values of today

Mikk Lõhmus, PhD, Lecturer at Tallinn University of Technology, Deputy Mayor of Saue Rural Municipality

The article focuses on the local government reform in Estonia that was prepared since the middle of the 1930s and carried out at the end of that decade. On the basis of the local government values acknowledged today, the author assesses the local government reform of 1938 first of all from the aspect of rural municipalities reform, estimating whether the purpose of the reform was merely to change the borders of municipalities and reduce

their number, or to regulate their functions, system of financing and management model. He finds that it was a forced reform carried out by the state. The functions of rural municipalities were not changed and their revenue base did not change significantly. Thus, the most important aim of the rural municipalities reform was to reorganise the boundaries of rural municipalities and to bring them into conformity with the changed social circumstances. This resembles several administrative reform conceptions proposed today, which also do not speak about enlarging the functions and revenue base of local governments but first of all concentrate on more efficient solving of existing functions, hiring qualified officials and guaranteeing investment capability. The most important nuance of the reform of 1938 was the political aspect of the reform, that is, increasing the influence of the state over rural municipalities. It was mainly expressed in the adopted Rural Municipality Act and its provisions. Indirectly, the saving of costs achieved through the reduction of the number of rural municipalities also served the interests of the state. Unfortunately it is not possible to assess the impact of that rural municipalities reform in mid-term or longer perspective because the occupation that started soon after it severed the development of the state. The development of local governments in Estonia stopped until the beginning of the 1990s.

Voluntary mergers of local governments: processes and results

Kersten Kattai, Lecturer in public Management, Tallinn University Institute of Political Science and Governance

Georg Sootla, Professor of Public Policy, Tallinn University Institute of Political Science and Governance

Ave Viks, Doctoral Student of Political Science, Tallinn University

It is not the lack of policies or analyses that prevents the changes in the Estonian local government system to be carried out. The obstacles are much deeper and more institutional than is often perceived. Although mergers have an important role, the objectives achieved only by means of mergers tend to remain instrumental and, more often than not, declarative. The context of voluntary mergers is even more complicated because they include a number of factors which hinder taking full advantage of the potential of the merged local governments. Many bottlenecks of the local government system lie in the relations between the central government and the local government. The fact that local governments which have extensive autonomy pursuant to the Constitution are incapable of being an equal partner to the state shows that, in reforming the local government system, a much more strategic and more complicated approach is needed than can be achieved by voluntary mergers. The random mergers which take place in reality do not bring along changes in the local government system on a wider scale. Therefore the authors find that the central government uses the supporting of voluntary mergers to a large part as a fake reform plan in order to justify the failure to carry out a comprehensive local government reform.

Quality management

Quality management and its implementation in the public management

Heino Levald, Candidate of Technology, Doctor of Economics, founding member of the Estonian Association for Quality

The article introduces the story of the development and the basic concepts of quality and the quality management, and the standard systems DIN and ISO. The old member states of the European Union are engaging in the quality management in the public sector for a long time already and most of them went through the stage of ISO-based quality management already in the last century. Estonia regained independence as late as in 1991 and, in the public management, knowledge about the essence and necessity of the quality

management and of the opportunities of implementing it is scarce, especially in local governments. In order to change the situation, improving of the public management should be begun by developing and implementing an ISO-based quality management system which will then create preconditions for implementation of the CAF-method and other new methods for improving the management quality. It is possible to apply for assistance from the state through the State Chancellery. The quality management is not complicated in essence; it only takes initiative and use of consultative assistance where necessary. The inventions related to the development of organisations offered by the author of the article are also waiting to be implemented.

Lifelong learning

Challenges of green economy to the lifelong learning system

Olav Aarna, Member of Board, Foundation Estonian Qualification Authority

One achievement of the last decade is the clearly acknowledged need to make the economy of the world and of every country more environment friendly, more sustainable in terms of energy and raw materials – this means, greener. However, a much more complicated question is how to move on from acknowledging of the problem to the level of activities. In 2009, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) launched an international comparative study “Skills for green jobs” with participation of 26 states, including Estonia. The study gives a thorough overview of what has been done in Estonia in the formation of a policy which would ensure the development of green economy and of a lifelong learning system which would meet the needs of green economy. The axis of our green policy is the national strategy for sustainable development “Sustainable Estonia 21”, adopted in the Riigikogu in 2005, to which a whole lot of specific strategies and development and activity plans oriented to a closer time horizon (3–7 years) covering all important spheres of economy and lifelong learning can be added. In conclusion, the Estonian lifelong learning system has so far been relatively successful in facing the challenges of green economy. One reason of this success is flexible combination of the state-directed policy-based approach with the development needs of enterprises.

Citizen culture

Development of political party membership in Estonia in 1995–2009

Priit Kallakas, Master of Comparative Politics

Mass media continues to play an increasing role in politics while the importance of the party membership takes the back seat, because the media offers a much quicker way to reach the voters than can be done by campaigning through party members. This is probably the reason why membership in parties has been in decline in most of Europe over the last decades, with the exception of Estonia and three Southern European countries – Spain, Portugal and Greece. The high party membership numbers of Estonia could be explained by the institutionalisation of former national movements after Estonia regained its independence, as well as the newly presented opportunity to contribute to social processes after a fifty year hiatus. Yet we cannot overlook the weakness of our citizens' associations, including the trade unions, which spurs many active people keen to participate in social processes to see party membership as the only option. Other noteworthy features of Estonian parties include their club-like functioning and wide range of services. Political parties offer people an opportunity to spend time together and participate in educational, sports and entertainment events. Which is why in smaller local governments with no organised social life and with limited financial resources, political parties might be the only places for social interaction.

European level political parties

Political parties operating at European level

Jaanika Erne, Doctoral Student, Tartu University, Faculty of Law

Political parties operating at European level enable to control supranational power in Europe. Thus the political parties operating at European level contribute to shaping policies.

The article opens the concept of the political party functioning at European level, defines it from political foundation at European level and briefly explains the legal bases of the activities of a political party. After that an overview is given of the political parties operating at European level and Estonia's representation in them.

Political parties operating at European level are generally divided into rightist, centrist and leftist parties. It is also possible to distinguish between liberals, radicals, social democrats and conservatives, although the names of several political parties at European level clearly show their relying on several basic ideologies. It should be taken into account that political parties at European level have grown out of the historically developed political parties of European countries and their dynamics. The system of political parties operating at European level may be called a multi-party system; several characteristic features of a catch-all party – pluralism, information society and other features characteristic of postmodernism – and also, because of the large number of members, the characteristic features of a mass party can be found in the system; at the same time the citizens have the possibility of following and influencing the work of the political parties through global networks (e.g. the Internet).

The need for political parties operating at European level should be assessed both from the standpoint of organising of elections (although the citizens of Member States put forward and elect their representatives to the European Parliament, political parties at European level participate in organising election campaigns to the European parliament) and from the standpoint of reflecting and shaping the political landscape of pluralist Europe. In the integrated Europe of today, the political parties at European level reflect besides all-European political spectrum also the ideological spectrum of Europe – religions, green ideologies, national ideologies, attitude towards minorities (the Roma and other national groups), racism, resistance movements, other ideological tensions – and shape the all-European public opinion through different media channels.

Labour market

How young Estonians view their possibilities of entering the labour market

Ulrika Hurt, Project Manager of the MA Programme in European Union Studies of the University of Tartu European College

Signe Tõnismäe, Postgraduate Student in European Union Studies in the University of Tartu European College

In August 2010 the Estonian National Youth Council conducted an online study among 15–30 year olds to find out how young people rate their access to labour market and career information and social services, how probable they consider landing the desired job, the importance they attach to informal studies and work practice in finding a job and in combining work and studies. The study comprised a total of 1317 respondents between the ages of 15 and 30. 45 % of them thought that the Internet should have more information on labour market and career opportunities. The majority of the respondents thought that the problem in passing on information to young people arises from the fact that information is published in media publications that are not popular among the young

and that they do not read. One way of ensuring that young people have better access to quality jobs, support programmes and information is through youth-oriented information events, such as information seminars and conferences. The respondents suggested that public events that include fun elements entice more young people to attend and ensure a wider spread of information.

Education

Education and national identity as shapers of social coherence

Urve Läänemets, PhD

Katrin Kalamees-Ruubel, Doctoral Student, Tallinn University

Anu Sepp, Doctoral Student, Helsinki University

The article discusses the potential of general education as a developer of the coherence of the Estonian society and as a shaper of national identity on the basis of the subjects of mother tongue, literature, music, history and civic education. Identity is viewed as collective belonging to a community. All general education subjects have a certain role and potential in the development of a person's world view and socialisation in a wider sense. The authors consider the general education school a tool of education policy which enables the adoption of desired identities (for example, loyalty to one's own state) and rejection of undesired identities (e. g. intolerance). Namely the content of education given at the upper secondary school stage of general education school and at vocational schools should create the conditions and opportunities for young people in critical stage of development to define their identity on the basis of reasoned choices. The impact of the content of education and national curricula on social coherence is greater than can be seen at first glance. One of the most interesting experiences connected with national and ethnic identity problems comes from the United Kingdom, where the so-called Ajegbo report raised the issue of being a member of British society (Britishness) and development of social coherence through education. In the same way as Brits, we, too, have got stuck in defining and using the spiritual, moral, social and cultural heritage of our small but multicultural society in the integration processes of the period of re-establishment of independence. Therefore it would be advisable to take into account, especially in drafting the history and civic studies curricula, that through them it is possible to shape a student's reasoned and versatile understanding of different identities and the social diversity of society.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND STATE AUTHORITY

Village movement

Village people have their say

Katrin Uudeküll, Member of Management Board of Estonian Village Movement Kodukant, leader of village life in Uudeküla

People who live in rural areas find that the organisers of the life in Estonia and the decision-makers should more often go to rural municipalities and villages to see the circumstances and to listen to people, give advice on the spot and organise information days and trainings there. This expectation was revealed by an internet poll which the Estonian Village Movement Kodukant organised among the people living in villages at the beginning of 2010. The aim of the poll was to map the current situation and problem issues of villages and the village movement. 162 village movement activists from all over Estonia sent their responses. Among other things, respondents were asked to make proposals on their part on how to better organise the communication between the county associations of the village movement Kodukant and villages. Responses suggested that all possible channels be used because every channel has its own users. Most people in rural areas are also ready to receive and seek information through the Internet, both by e-mail

and by visiting websites. At the same time, it was found that important topics and important information should also be communicated in local newspapers and radio, besides the abovementioned channels.

HISTORY OF THE PARLIAMENT

Restoration of the Republic of Estonia

The Republic of Estonia on its way home: constitutional development 1990–1992

Jüri Raidla, sworn advocate, Minister of Justice 1990–1992

The author finds that Estonia was successful in the restoration of the state and the legal order in the years 1990–1992 and thereafter owing to several different circumstances. Politics was done not so much in the streets as mainly in representative bodies, by using parliamentary methods. Destruction of the Estonian SSR and the Soviet Union was carried out by legal measures. It was a war of laws, where Estonia's position did not depend on the inequality of brutal force but on our legal reason and rationality and political balance. We were strong in that. The restoration of the Republic of Estonia and building of the state based on the rule of law was carried out according to the principles of the rule of law as far as possible. In basic issues, reasonable political agreements were reached between the main political forces who were striving for independence. The axis and foundation of all Acts and other legislation having general political influence was of course the concept of legal continuity which is of greater significance and meaning than may seem at first glance. It is the conceptual axis which served as the supporting point for all events of the restoration of statehood and establishing of the legal order and the related political discussion. At the same time, legal continuity has also functioned as a practical concept, a striking example of which is the ownership and land reform carried out in Estonia. It was thanks to reliance on legal continuity that a complex Principles of Ownership Reform Act could be passed in 1991 which had a clear fundamental concept and which in the end enabled to move assets in the right and fair direction in the course of the reform.

Women politicians

Women in the Parliament of Estonia

Mai Vöörmann, Information Specialist, National Library of Estonia

“Women in the Parliament of Estonia, 1917–1940 and 1992–2010”, an electronic publication of the National Library of Estonia (www.nlib.ee/14889), gives an overview of the activities of women in legislative bodies (in different periods of history this body has had different names – Provisional Assembly of the Governorate of Estonia, Constituent Assembly of Estonia, Riigikogu, Rahvuskogu).

During the last decade, both experts at conferences, seminars and forums, as well as ordinary people have actively discussed gender equality in Estonia. The most tangible result of the discussions is apparently the fact that the position of Gender Equality Commissioner has been established and the problem is acknowledged; however, no decisive change in the values and opinions of the people has taken place. Women are still mainly seen as housekeepers, men as bread-winners for the family – as if the normal situation for Estonia should be that women earn 30 per cent less than men and their representation at the top level is still modest.

For example, in Estonia women form seven per cent of the chairpersons of the boards and governing councils of business enterprises. This is more than the average of the European Union (three per cent), but taking into account the percentage of women in population (54 per cent as of 1 January 2010), it is not enough. Without any intention to lessen the importance of the political activities of women who belonged to the Parliament after the re-establishment of independence and who are members of the Riigikogu today, first of all

the part dealing with more distant period in history deserves to be highlighted. The main reason for that is that we know much less about these women and their activities than about the women politicians who were active recently or are active now.

In essence, the publication is multi-layered. Although its main subject is the activity of women in the Parliament, it does not merely present the biographies of women but also gives a wider picture of the earlier period in several aspects. The part dealing with the years 1917–1940 begins with an overview of the activities of the 18 women who belonged to the legislative bodies of Estonia. Those who are interested can find out who were more successful women politicians and were elected more than once, and also how many women and from which political parties were elected to the Parliament. An overview by legislative bodies is also given. The part of the publication dealing with the earlier period can be considered finished (which does not mean that all facts about all persons are put down, or that the list of sources is exhausted), but the part dealing with more recent history will remain open. New personal data about and the positions of women politicians active today, and also new names of Estonian women politicians can be added to it. This is not a long list but it is a list of efficient people.

LITERATURE AND DATABASES

Social network

Parliament and social media

Aivar Jarne, Head of the Press Service of the Chancellery of the Riigikogu

Since the number of social network users has mushroomed in recent years, parliaments, including the Riigikogu, can no longer ignore them.

At a time when the Riigikogu web page attracts around 6000 visitors during sitting weeks, the search for new e-communication channels is only to be expected. Our European Union Affairs Committee has already joined Facebook as well as Twitter and regularly posts there. New social media are continuously gaining popularity among our MPs (33 % have a Facebook account, 27 % write a blog, 13 % use Twitter).

Since the summer of 2010, social media channels have been linked to the new web pages of our MPs. In view of the rapid spread of electronic social media network and the wish of the MPs to communicate with the public via social media, links to social networks are an amply justified part of MPs sites. An information seeker thus enters into a personal contact with an MP and can give them direct feedback in issues of interest.

In order to present the work of the Riigikogu more efficiently and communicate better with the general public and the media, it is pertinent to use complementing means for information disclosure in addition to the traditional channels (e.g. press releases, live broadcasts of sittings online, verbal information, e-mails). These include a more active introduction of social networks on the one hand, and the transfer of the Riigikogu web channel to a new, more television-like web-TV level on the other. Social networks and particularly their flagship Facebook have come to stay as far as Internet users are concerned, and parliaments must not miss this train either.

Copyright

Copyright in the library: what it is useful to know

Karmen Linask, Copyright Specialist, National Library of Estonia

Libraries and their users inevitably face the issue of copyright because a large number of documents in collections are copyright protected. Libraries have a special position as those responsible for the materials protected with copyright. They have the duty to ensure the

preservation of materials and the access to them. On the one hand, all measures to protect the materials have to be used; on the other hand, an opportunity to use the materials has to be ensured. This overview contains only some principles of the use of the works protected with copyright: what is permitted, what is prohibited and what the Estonian Copyright Act says. The Estonian Copyright Act was passed in 1992. Copyright is an exclusive right in its essence: the author has the right to use his or her work in every way and to permit or prohibit the use of his or her work.

* Prereviewed research paper.