

Today, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves signed the resolution to proclaim the elections for the 11th Riigikogu on March 4, 2007. Before proclaiming the elections, the Head of State made the following statement on ETV:

“Dear fellow citizens,

today, I will sign the resolution proclaiming the election of the 11th Riigikogu on March 4th of next year.

I do so in a situation where the activities of both the coalition in power and the opposition exude ever-greater temporizing indecision and antagonism, in a situation where partisan benefits have started to smother national interests.

Such a gaze, which cannot see further than one’s nose, will prevent us from seeing Estonia’s objectives on the horizon. By continuing in this way, we could make ourselves smaller than we actually are-as a country and as a people.

There is one cure for this-the trust that develops when things get talked through. I want to call upon you all to believe in democracy and democratic choices. The elections, and the foregoing campaign, are the spice and yeast of the kitchen of democracy. This is a time to sharpen our outlook and set new goals.

Good people of Estonia,

the choice that every citizen must make in little more than three months is very simple. Is this a transaction or a contract? In a transaction, you may receive a concrete thing for your vote. For instance, a higher salary or a one-time subsidy.

However, you are allowing yourself to be misled. Salaries are raised by employers, not candidates. Pensions and child supports also do not come from party pocketbooks.

A contract, on the other hand, contains a plan of action for four years. It explains the background and costs of the promises. On Election Day, every citizen should become an employer, who pointedly inquires: Is my elected representative working in my interests? Is he or she fulfilling his or her obligations and responsibility toward me as a voter, and not toward his or her party leader?

When deliberating between a transaction and a contract, I recommend you to sign a contract. Because only then, good voters, do you have the right to tell the candidate what to write in that contract. We must not be satisfied with the compulsory menu offered during the campaign, which is already confronting us from walls and television screens.

Before the elections, we must discuss those and only those issues, which need to be cleared up during the next four years for you as a voter, and for Estonia as a nation. We must clarify the place of the Estonian state in Estonia itself, as well as Estonia's place in the world.

We must ask those who aspire to the Parliament: In an ever-wealthier Estonia, why are police and rescue officials leaving their jobs? Why are we short of doctors? Where are the motivated young teachers? Why does increasing national wealth not guarantee security or create confidence that our children will receive a better education?

We must demand an explanation from the candidates: Why is the citizenry's belief in the rule of law wavering. Why is the intent of the law being distorted behind the protective shield of legal propriety? Why do some of our businesspeople knowingly disregard the law and proper behavioural practices, while still enjoying the patronage of politicians? Why is the political debate rampant with language that prompts us to cover our children's ears when we hear it?

Good fellow citizens,

use the time left before the elections to pose questions and to frame your contract conditions. Let us listen to the answers, think along, and make our choice on Election Day.

We are waiting for answers to these and other questions from the politicians. I wish the Riigikogu candidates an honest campaign, in which the distortion of the law or the intent of the law and the slander of opponents have no place.

Only an intelligent and balanced exchange of ideas will benefit you and the entire Estonian nation.”

Public Relations Department of the Office of the President
Kadriorg, 30 November 2006