

The independence and impartiality of judges, as well as their professionalism, is generally no longer called into question, stated President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, when speaking today at the Juridical General Assembly that convened in Pärnu.

“Evidently as a result, the occupation has become prestigious, which is confirmed by that fact that many very talented jurists of the younger generation have decided on a future in the juridical profession,” said the Head of State. “I am convinced that Estonia’s judiciary today is professional and capable of development.”

According to President Ilves, the parliament made the correct decision last year when it annulled a law that would have allowed judges to join political parties, which had yet to come into force, because it is difficult for partisan judges to be regarded as impartial in their administration of justice, even if, in practice, their party memberships have no effect on their judicial activities.

“Unfortunately, in today’s Estonia, the membership of judges in political parties would not make the judicial system more transparent, rather it would seriously call the impartiality of the administration of justice into question. Moreover, as we know, trust is always as much a question of appearance as actuality,” said President Ilves.

According to the Head of State, what people primarily expect from the judiciary and judges is that the administration of justice be equitable and effective, that justice be administered as quickly as possible, so that the resulting resolutions are as recognizable as possible.

“I think that judicial work should also involve openness — a readiness to explain matters related to the administration of justice to people,” said President Ilves. “This does not mean that, after making judgments, judges should have to provide lengthy justifications. However, it is important that judicial decisions be understandable to both the parties involved, as well as to the wider public.”

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