

Yesterday on Toompea, in speech to the opening meeting of the fall session of the Riigikogu, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves stressed that the gauge for measuring the success of the parliament's work is not the number of hours spent sitting in the hall, nor the number of laws that have been passed; the voters have a reason to be satisfied with the work of the Riigikogu only when the legislators' current and future resolutions help Estonia to successfully cope with the problems that have already risen, or are rising, on the horizon.

"Therefore, in the upcoming year, I see the key obligation of the Riigikogu to be dealing with fields in which the solutions will affect the welfare of the Estonian people and nation in 15-20 years," said the Head of State. "Principally, I mean educational and research policies, population and health care policies, integration policies and energy. Success in these fields will guarantee an increased sense of security for our people accompanied by stable development for Estonia."

Sustained action plans are also a question of political culture, and more narrowly, of the communications between the political parties represented in the parliament, said President Ilves, and recommended that the leaders of the parliamentary factions, and why not also the leaders of the parties, find opportunities for regular consultations, "This would be a serious attempt at achieving long-term solutions. This would also help to improve the reputations of the Riigikogu and politicians; some political intrigues might be avoided and some needlessly mean words might remain unsaid in the parliamentary hall."

In his speech, the Head of State lingered on the deplorable state of traffic behavior, which directly threatens the future of our nation.

"If we look at the number of people killed in traffic accidents, as well as in fires and work accidents, and by drowning during the past 16 years in Estonia, we are faced with an atrocious picture," said President Ilves. "This becomes even more dreadful if we add the numbers for intentional killing and alcohol-related deaths. We are confronted by thousands and thousands of lives that have been interrupted unduly early—lives that could have continued, if we had been more caring or smarter."

The Head of State called upon the Riigikogu and the members of the government to concentrate their intellectual energy on solutions that can help to drastically reduce the number

of premature deaths.

Speaking about cyberattacks, the Head of State recalled the events of April and May, when Estonian state institutions, information channels, banks and other inseparable parts of our everyday life were struck by a massive Internet attack, and it later became apparent that a strong legal base for combating cybercrime and cyberterrorism is lacking throughout the world, but especially in the European Union.

“Why shouldn’t Estonia become a spokesperson in this field? We are vigorously moving in that direction, because the NATO cyber defense center will be established in Estonia,” said President Ilves. “In exactly the same way, the Estonian government, in cooperation with the Estonian parliament, could demonstrate initiative in the development of international legislation related to cyber defense. Dealing with tomorrow’s problems is the sign of a mature state.”

The Head of State also spoke about the fact that qualified people will shortly be needed to fill the positions of Chancellor of Justice, Auditor General, and Chairman of the Bank of Estonian Supervisory Board.

“I hope that we are able to stand above stubbornness, partisan interests, and convenience here,” said President Ilves. “Two of these three high state officials, constitutional institutions, directly or indirectly control our activities, of the parliament and the president. Equity and honesty, transparency and impartiality, experience and statesmanship— these words can, and should, characterize the work of the Chancellor of Justice and Auditor General.”

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