

“We are like twin brothers who, after many years apart, are again conducting our own and joint affairs together,” President Toomas Hendrik Ilves said at the Tallinn Town Hall today at the commemoration of the 90th Anniversary of Finnish Independence, the 70th Anniversary of the Finnish-Estonian Cultural Agreement, and the 25th Anniversary of the Tuglas Society.

During the years that Estonia was occupied, relationships with Estonia and Estonians and the support of Estonian values was a unique form of resistance to Soviet coercion for many Finns; a unique retaliation for what was done to the Finnish nation and to Finns during and after the Winter War, said the Estonian Head of State.

According to the President, the developments and resolve on the north coast of the Gulf of Finland added to the perseverance of Estonians to remain true to themselves; this kept alive the will to recreate the Estonian state and the idea of Estonian independence was mirrored in Finnish independence.

“This mirror also remained in place after the restoration Estonia’s independence. It was Finland, not some other European country on this or that side of the Iron Curtain that was the ideal for Estonia, the one we wanted to resemble. More accurately—the one we wanted to and still want to resemble,” said the President of the Republic.

“To a great extent, this is where the very strict standards of the Estonian people in respect to their leaders and politicians originate. It is this constructive discontent, this comparison with Finland that has helped us build up our country and economy so quickly,” said the Estonian Head of State.

President Ilves recalled the significant symbols of Estonian-Finnish cooperation, mentioning the spiritual cooperation agreement that is 70 years old today, and the Tuglas Society that gets its name from Friedebert Tuglas, a writer with a strong attachment to Finland, and which was a symbol that the heart and content of Finnish civil society remained whole.

“Finland and Estonia think in the same categories. We have common values, and we are the branches of the same tree,” emphasized President Ilves. “We are jointly responsible for keeping

the Baltic Sea viable. We struggle together in the name of making the world more equitable and safer. We are living proof for all skeptics that small nations and people can be independently successful. Even the most successful in the world, as the Finnish experience proves.”

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