

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who participated today in the inauguration of the monument to the declaration of the Republic of Estonia, called the independence manifest that was read in public for the first time 90 years ago a very modern, currently significant document.

“This is a document that speaks of a civil state on the threshold of a hopeful future, a state of equal citizens,” said the Head of State, adding, “It speaks of the rule of law, as a contrast to the Russian Empire.”

“All the citizens of the Republic of Estonia must find equal protection before the laws and courts of the republic... All civil liberties must apply irrefutably to the national minorities... The government must establish courts of law for the protection of the security of the citizenry...,” President Ilves said, enumerating the contents of the independence manifest.

“These are exactly the same principles that the Republic of Estonia must always rely on. These are rights and freedom that we also have to protect today, tomorrow, and every day. Moreover, we must not give into the temptation to get by easier by abandoning the freedoms and rights listed in the independence manifest,” said the Head of State. “We must preserve and protect the opportunity to live in a home where order and justice rule.”

President Ilves thought it important that the independence manifest declared principles that can be summarized with one word: democracy.

“Examining the world more broadly and afar then we see that not all people are enjoying the joys of democracy. We see the abandonment democracy and know this will continue to happen. This is a sad and dangerous picture,” the Head of State said.

“Estonia, which restored its independence 17 years ago, has made its choice. The Republic of Estonia has remained true to the ideas of the Endla Society Building,” said President Ilves. “Now as we pull the cover from the monument to the declaration of our state, let’s acknowledge those statesmen 90 years ago who dared to dream of a democratic Estonia and who had the strength and skills to realize this dream. Our assignment is to safeguard our state well.”

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