

“Estonia and the people of Estonia have endured a lot. However, even today we don’t have a real overview of what exactly happened in Estonia during the Soviet period,” said President Toomas Hendrik Ilves yesterday in Kadriorg, at the first session of the Learned Committee of the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory.

According to the head of state, together with our children we have the right to know what happened. “This is why the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory will take over where the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity finished. By mapping and investigating human rights violations that were committed during the Soviet period in 1944-1991, which do not match the definition of crimes against humanity.”

“The goal of the Institute of Historical Memory is not to explain whether human rights were violated in Soviet Estonia. There’s no question about it,” said President Ilves. “However, detailed historical research is required to answer as to how and to which extent human rights were violated.”

The President emphasised that the Institute of Historical Memory is not intended to administer justice or find someone guilty. “The facts that will be identified by the institute shall have no legal consequences. Our mission is to understand.”

The research of the institute will be carried out on the basis of grants awarded to scholars. The international committee will make the final decisions regarding the approval of research grants.

The establishment of the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory was initiated by President Ilves on 1st February 2008. The International Learned Committee of the Institute of Historical Memory involves notable researchers and politicians from a number of states:

Enrique Barón Crespo (Spain), researcher of law and economics, and former President of the European Parliament from 1989-1992

Timothy Garton Ash (United Kingdom), Professor of European Studies at Oxford University, Leading Researcher of Isaiah Berlin Lectorate of St. Anthony College of Oxford University and Senior Researcher of Hoover's Institute of Stanford University

Kristian Gerner (Sweden), Professor Emeritus of Lund University, historian

Paavo Keisalo (Finland), retired diplomat, acting assistant of Minister Max Jakobson in 1999–2009, while he was discharging the functions of the Head of Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity

Nicholas Lane (United States of America), former Vice President of American Jewish Committee and Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Relations, member of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity in 1999–2009

Lasse Lehtinen (Finland), writer, member of the European Parliament in 2004–2009

Markus Meckel (Germany), religious scientist and politician, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the former German Democratic Republic from April to August 1990, member of the German Bundestag in 1990–2009 former freedom fighter, and the first and final democratic

Norman M. Naimark (United States of America), Robert and Florence McDonnell Professor in East European Studies at Stanford University

Yakov M. Rabkin (Canada), Professor of History at Montreal University

Pavel Žáček (Czech Republic), social scientist, Director of the Institute for the Investigation of Totalitarian Regimes

[Framework document](#) of the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory.

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