

The new Parliament will turn a new page; it has a new mandate and every member of the Riigikogu will start again and anew today, said the President, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, today on Toompea, as he gave a presentation at the opening session of the XII Riigikogu.

“This means that you must not be bound by what has been, should you find that what was done does not really work. This means that you can do things differently and in a new way, if they did not work as required when done in the old way. Essentially, follow your convictions,” the Head of State said. “The Constitution has decreed the Riigikogu to last through time. On the one hand, this will place you with the obligation of being worthy of your predecessors, and to maintain and promote what was done here before. On the other hand, the attitude adopted by the Estonian people with respect to the Parliament and also its country in ten, fifty and one hundred years will depend on you.”

According to President Ilves, every member of the Riigikogu has this one, yet completely exceptional prerogative: to represent the people, supported by the trust shown by the potentates of the supreme power and adopt decisions, who will determine the fate of the country.

“Therefore, each and every member of the Riigikogu shall have double the responsibility. He/she must earn his or her mandate and represent the will of his or her electorate. But he/she will also be responsible for the Parliament, the sequence numbers of which shall keep growing as long as the Republic of Estonia survives,” said the Head of State.

The President of the Republic emphasised: The most important attribute of a member of the Riigikogu is the understanding that he/she has been appointed to serve. To serve his/her electorate, to serve his/her country.

“This honour shall not be distinguished by gender, age, political party or polling station. This is a capital that is accustomed to measuring the efficiency of your work on the day your authority in this building shall end. And together let us hope that there will be more moral capital to hand down to your descendants than you found here yourself today,” stated the Head of State. “If the needle of your moral compass points in the right direction, and if you proceed with an awareness that the language of this country and nation and our culture and mentality will sustain our country and every person, this shall not be a difficult task.”

President Ilves recommended that the members of the Riigikogu begin to fulfil the mandate granted by their electorate and to ask themselves, directly and honestly: is life everywhere in Estonia equally worth living? Will all our talents blossom? Does the education provided by our universities meet the needs of our smartest young people? Do our basic schools, vocational schools and gymnasiums prepare young people to cope and find work in the economy of the 21st

century? Will the best ideas become decisions that promote common interests? Are the constitutional rights of citizens refutably protected, always and everywhere? Are we all, regardless our native language and culture, happy right here, in Estonia?

“As long as the answer is negative or even hesitant, we should not worry about our lack of objectives,” the Head of State told. “Estonia’s next objective is to shape our country into a living environment that our kin will not leave, where people will return to, having gained enriching experiences, and where all the friends of Estonia will want to live, accomplish their goals and enrich our shared lives. And only then will we have a country that looks and acts as if the occupation never happened.”

This is a goal worth the effort of surpassing oneself; this deserves suppressing personal ego and the pettiness of political parties and calls for substantial co-operation between the coalition and the opposition, assured President Ilves.

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