

Beloved co-countrymen.

Christmas Eve, the eternal time when hope is born and faith is universal, is a time to take a reflective look at ourselves and our companions.

Caring, taking notice, compassion and helping as well as faith and hope should be our guides during the Christmas time and beyond.

I invite each and every one of you to take notice of those around you who need help and support with their problems or difficulties. It is easy – yet reflective of our indifference – to say that this is a problem of the Government. It is, this is true, and the Estonian Parliament and Government must find better and stronger solutions. However, taking notice of those in trouble and giving them help requires humane regard and a compassionate mind in all of us. We should never be in so big of a hurry that we do not have the time to take notice of the problems of people both close and more distant from us. And let us be honest, Estonia is too small for anyone to become too distant for us.

Therefore, we also need more tolerance and understanding; our character should be benevolent and open, and we must respect the choices of people around us. The less evil and malice there is, the more we can find dignity and goodness. Christmas is the best time for understanding this.

As we light our Christmas candles, we also think of those who have left us this year and the trail of memories they have left behind. However, I am also concerned, because this past year approximately one hundred people have lost their lives on Estonian roads and dozens and dozens have died in other accidents. These accidents are often caused by the carelessness of others, even if overshadowed by fatal arrogance. My beloved people, let us care about ourselves, our next of kin and companions. We are the only ones who can turn a black Christmas in Estonia into white.

As we look beyond Estonia, we understand that these times – which inevitably affect all of us – offer both insecurity and hope. I do also trust that Europe will find a more effective and reassuring way to overcome the difficulties and reach a stronger and more secure future. Estonia has shown by its choices that this is possible.

Apart from economic success and defence, the last few decades have taught us that security, both as citizens and a country, is built upon honesty, responsibility and ethical values, the meaning and importance of which we must remind ourselves – and others, when necessary. It is appropriate to recollect the obligation to remain honest and fair to those who are elected and appointed as it is to every one of us.

I wish you observance, caring and reaching out. I wish a peaceful Christmas time to all of you.

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