

The candidate for the position of Auditor General and ensuring the efficiency of the so-called Ice Cellar initiative were the main issues discussed at the meeting between the President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, and the chairpersons of the political parties in the Riigikogu, Kaia Iva (Pro Patria and Res Publica Union), Kadri Simson (Centre Party), Jaanus Tamkivi (Reform Party), Sven Mikser (Social Democratic Party) and the representative of the independent deputies, Rainer Vakra.

The Head of State announced at the meeting that the former Rector of the Estonian University of Life Sciences and University of Tartu had accepted his proposal to run for the Auditor General's office.

"Both the Parliament and I want to find a person for this position who knows the state in and out, is experienced and sophisticated, has a broad mind, and would be neutral and efficient in the position of Auditor General," told President Ilves. "I do hope that Alar Karis will gain the support of the Riigikogu."

Following the meeting of the representatives of third sector organisations, parliamentary parties and political experts that took place on 21 November, which was convened by the Head of State, further steps were also discussed to develop proposals for changes in the spheres listed below by spring:

- integrity and controllability of the funding of political parties, including diminishing the importance of financial leverage in the political decision-making process;
- integrity and viability of competition between and within political parties;
- the weight of votes given by the electorate in decisions regarding election results;
- the honest involvement of citizens and more extensive participation in political processes during the period between consecutive elections;
- halting (enforced) politicization and establishing links to political parties in social space.

"The Estonian Cooperation Assembly is currently working to establish a common creative environment; proposals can be made during January after which experts will analysis the impact of the proposals, followed by public meetings, and the proposals and suggestions will be submitted to the Riigikogu by the end of March," told President Ilves in a short review.

"Dissatisfaction and disbelief in society have grown stronger than we may sense. For this reason, I am asking you to take the initiative seriously, and I am also asking the parties to suggest their proposals in the common creative environment," told the Head of State. According to the President, we now have the time to avoid a long trench war between political parties and the third sector where a failure would represent a loss for everyone, not just the coalition party.

"Ignoring the concerns and proposals of the people would be damaging for Estonia in general. Open and honest governance is something we have to fight for – all together – this is not an issue for only one party or the coalition alone. It is now time to make up for our mistakes and what is most important: giving weight to the voice of the people. We must make democracy in Estonia more competitive, honest and transparent," emphasised President Ilves.

To date, a number of substantial proposals have already been made. Proposals received by the Estonian Cooperation Assembly or the Office of the President even before the launching of the common creative environment on 1 January will be entered into the created environment. The submission and discussion of proposals in the common creative environment will be followed by public discussions and the submission of proposals that have won the general support of the Riigikogu.

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