

The new Human Development Report, published today, shows that Estonia has, in fact, been performing well, said the President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, at the presentation of the Human Development Report of Estonia, organised at Tallinn University by the Estonian Cooperation Assembly.

Within a European Union context, Estonia ranks average or higher than average in most spheres of life – including democracy, freedom, development of the state, trust in institutions, innovation and corruption, stated the Head of State, referring to a summary review presented in the report in the form of a table.

"At the same time, the report also highlights our shortcomings – things in Estonia that require our attention," he said.

The spheres where we need to strive to catch up with the rest of Europe include the health and life expectancy of people, income and work productivity, and tolerance and gender mainstreaming, emphasised President Ilves, adding: "We are still reluctant when it comes to helping refugees, as we still find it difficult to live, side by side, with different peoples."

According to President Ilves, these are things that largely depend on people themselves, and not the state. "Attitudes towards other people and taking care of our own health and security are things that we can all improve upon ourselves. Each person can contribute towards improving these indicators that have, to date, been below the European average."

President Ilves also drew the attention of the audience to some interesting conflicts that the report revealed. The proportion of female students is the largest in Europe while the gender wage gap is also the widest. The lower level of education among men and lower wages of women facilitate the emigration of young women. "We should make better use of our human resources," stated President Ilves. "Each and every one of our people represents an opportunity; let us utilise them."

Another conflict is the fact that our satisfaction is relatively low but our faith in the future is higher than the respective average in Europe. "Apart from faith and will, we also need smart

political decisions that look far into the future," said the President. "We must think of what the state could do to change the behaviour of people to allow us to be proud, in the future, of the indicators that depend on decisions that people take themselves."

The Estonian Human Development Report is available for sale from the office of the Estonian Cooperation Assembly at Roheline aas 5, Tallinn.

Office of the President
Public Relations Department
Phone +372 631 6229