

Dear people of Estonia,

This morning, I signed the resolution to declare that the elections for the new Riigikogu will take place on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2011. Early voting will begin from Independence Day, 24<sup>th</sup> February.

Good fellow citizens.

Before the elections, I call on you to discuss and reflect upon your responsibility. By this, I mean the responsibility of everyone to make as wise a choice as possible. But also, it is the responsibility of the political parties to develop proposals to make our society better.

Political responsibility is something much, much more than a cornered politician resolving to change his or her position.

First of all, it is the responsibility to make democracy work. Representative democracy does not mean that we assign responsibility for the state and society to political parties on polling day. The citizens do not assign their power; rather they grant a fixed-term authorisation to adopt resolutions that are required for society and the country to progress.

Of course, we still reserve the right to regret our choice later. Nevertheless, we are responsible for what and whom we elect. Choosing not to elect will not relieve us of our responsibility. This just deprives us of the right to demand something better.

Secondly – the responsibility of a politician. A politician is responsible for the fairness and honesty of his actions, as is any other citizen. The fate of thousands of companies, and sometimes even the whole nation, is at stake each time a politician pushes a button or raises a hand.

The responsibility of each representative of the people is, at that time, personal and public. The representative is available for the people and history to judge. This is not a responsibility to be passed on to either a party or fraction. Likewise, neither the Riigikogu nor democracy as a whole can be held responsible for the unsightly actions of a few politicians.

Thirdly – we have a responsibility or, more specifically, an obligation to be demanding. Political parties suggest political solutions that they consider best, regarding the issues that they see as important. They consider themselves experts in particular areas. This is their right.

Yet the electorate has the right to say: I do not agree. There are other important issues and I demand a solution. The electorate has the right to ask for a fair and honest election campaign that has both format and substance and complies with the law. Let's not forget that it is the people who will sign the employment contracts of politicians on 6<sup>th</sup> March.

Good fellow citizens.

Estonia is a small enough country and we have enough wise people to ensure that everything is yet possible. As long as we do not give up dreaming and wanting, anything is possible. We all have but one vote at the elections – no more, no less. I wish you, for the pre-election period, perception as a citizen and awareness of your personal responsibility to use your vote wisely.