

Dear friends,

We will soon be stepping into the New Year. I hope that it will be better than the year before, which was full of insecurity.

You could say that last year was 'shaky'. The world we had become accustomed to came unstuck. We saw the flow of refugees into Europe, which was something our generation had never witnessed before, and we saw war in Europe – Ukraine – and further away, in Syria, which also had an impact on Europe.

The uncertainty at home is adding to the shakiness. The thoughts or common direction of the coalition, born of the will of the voters, are sometimes impossible to understand. The Government has yet to find a rhythm for working together. I hope to see some improvement in this in the New Year.

Europe and Europeans are at a crossroads. One again, we can hear the creaking of shaky joints, even dangerous egoism. As Europeans, we should understand that the migration from the East to the West and from the South to the North is a challenge we have to face together.

Let's not mislead ourselves with thoughts that we can detach ourselves from all this. I wouldn't advise anyone to be left by themselves in our Europe, especially in this corner here. History has shown us that we cannot do it on our own.

We can find the best solution together if we are open and honest with each other and look each other in the eye. Fear and scaremongering don't help, they're nothing but deception and a waste of time.

I have no doubt: Estonia will manage, Europe will manage.

Fellow countrymen,

Before the holidays, I received a letter from a young person who had settled in Estonia. It's a personal letter, so I will not be revealing their name. But this letter, in pure Estonian, made me happy, because it also said the following:

"... this year has been a very special one for me. Starting with the feeling that I can actually consider Estonia my home country. And the year ends for me with dozens of new and extremely exciting acquaintances. This experience has enriched and brought joy to my family and me. "

These sincere words are praise to all of us. They show recognition of the kindness, helpfulness and hospitality of Estonia. Sometimes, we tend to be embarrassed about it or afraid to show it. But we have to admit that goodness and generosity are the things that keep us together. As does the belief that tomorrow will be better, tomorrow is a new start.

The hundreds of thousands of euros raised for charity by Jõulutunnel are a testament to this. But there is another thought we should take away from this show: we have to look after ourselves and our loved ones. First of all, we should not be indifferent or too embarrassed to visit a doctor.

We should also avoid resorting to insults and derision in order to improve the health of society, the health of the public space.

We can observe past and future events with a smile on our lips or tears in our eyes. We can make them beautiful in our thoughts, or regret that they were not as beautiful as they could've been.

However, it's important to admit that our own lives, the life of Estonia and the whole world are in our hands. The hands of the people who live here.

Fellow countrymen,

I wish you all beautiful new beginnings, faith in yourselves and your people, strength of mind and confidence.

We love Estonia, we believe in Estonia. Let us rise to welcome the New Year and say together:  
"Long live Estonia!"

Happy New Year!