

Since 1988, when it became possible again to speak publicly of the historical significance of the Tartu Peace Treaty, it has been analysed so thoroughly and extensively that its importance to be obvious to everyone.

First and foremost: in concluding the Tartu Peace Treaty Estonia became a subject of international law. Meaning, we became a recognized country, no longer a territory. Our relations with others became state-to-state.

Recognition by Soviet Russia was followed by other countries. For most Western democracies, recognition remained unbroken. That the legal successor of Soviet Russia, the first country to recognise Estonia, today does not recognise the Tartu Peace Treaty, is, at least in terms of our sovereignty or international relations, utterly irrelevant.

The Tartu Peace Treaty is the scaffolding with which we have built our home, our country. Estonia exists and shall continue to exist as a country even if someone denies the existence of the scaffolding.

This is why I would like to speak of Estonia's foreign policy. Today, when we celebrate Estonia's becoming a subject of international law.

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In its international relations, Estonia has reached a new, more mature stage. Our goals are more complex. We no longer look toward a specific milestone we need to achieve; rather we need to assert, widen and deepen our interests.

Thus for some time already the success of our foreign policy is not reflected by what we read in the Others about us columns in the papers. If that were still the case it would mean we have a reactive, not a pro-active foreign policy. To be a pro-active mature country in the international arena calls for much more than responding to all the favourable or unfavourable things others may have to say or write about us.

A number of years ago, I said that after our accession to the European Union and NATO, we no longer seem to have any major goals left. I meant this not as a reproach but as a statement of fact. So let me re-phrase it: After accession to the organisations of existential importance to Estonia, our goals are no longer easily defined. All too often it is no longer possible to say a goal has been achieved, to stamp a task "Done".

Nowadays, our task is to have an impact and influence in those two organisations regarding issues with the greatest and most immediate bearing on our interests. Our goals include Estonia's own initiatives in areas whose relevance others perhaps have not yet quite realised. Estonia's initiative on cyber security in NATO serves as a good example.

Considering these goals, Estonia must have a clear understanding of her own capabilities and opportunities. I argue that we are capable of much more. We must abandon the attitude that we are too small to make a difference. Estonia would never have established its independence with

the Tartu Peace Treaty 88 years ago by appealing to its smallness and thus also to its insignificance.

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Estonia must take an active stance wherever our security is discussed or at stake. In those issues we must assert ourselves. Constantly, daily, year in and year out. Nor is accomplishing this is some arcane mystery. Many other small countries, such as Luxembourg and Ireland, have succeeded at this.

Let us first consider our primary security needs. NATO is the mode and the channel the United States uses for its relations with Europe. As most of us clearly understand, it is in Estonia's interests for the US to be present and to continue to participate in Europe's security system.

I am glad that this conviction is shared by the current governments of Germany and France. I am glad that on both sides of the Atlantic the pointless dichotomisation of „new” and „old” Europe has ended. I am especially glad that Édouard Balladur, a former Prime Minister of France, has underlined the need for more extensive co-operation, suggesting in his new book that the European Union and the US should form a Union of the West.

In this new atmosphere, we and other like-minded countries have the chance to strengthen and extend our transatlantic ties. But this also requires Estonia's efforts and Estonia's contribution.

NATO membership also means participation in the NATO missions. This elementary notion is not necessarily always popular. If we allow NATO to develop into an à la carte alliance, where everyone chooses whether or not to participate in a mission – we may face a time when we, too, might not happen to be everyone's choice on the menu. This we cannot allow.

Being part of NATO also requires and assumes our intellectual contribution. In the coming years, active debate concerning Article Five, or application of collective defence, shall be launched. We know that if the infrastructure of a NATO member state is destroyed by rocket attack, Article Five applies. Yet should that same infrastructure be paralysed by a cyberattack, the applicability of Article 5 is far from clear.

This is an area where Estonia can and must contribute. Thus I am truly pleased that one of NATO's new cyber security initiatives includes, along with the US, the United Kingdom, and France also Estonia's signature. This is the way for Estonia to proceed.

In the same spirit, we must tackle other areas requiring an intellectual contribution. To name just a few: revision of the CFE Treaty, Baltic air-policing, and EU-NATO relations at a time when duplication of military capabilities of the two organisations is no longer rational, are all areas we should contribute.

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As for the European Union, the range of issues we face is far broader and more complicated. There we need to act in situations, where the interests of different member states often run at cross-purposes. For a small country, having an impact often takes much greater effort. Yet it is not impossible. We need only to look at Luxembourg to see a country whose population is three times smaller than Estonia's, but whose impact on the EU policies is far, far greater than one would expect.

Each country is unique. What holds for one, need not work for another. Therefore we must find our own, Estonian solutions. We must have the courage to admit that some ways of doing things which worked before, have outlived their usefulness

I would like to suggest some new solutions for an active and effective foreign policy toward the European Union.

First, a well-functioning Estonia in Europe needs a much stronger team of experts. Especially in the areas that are important both to us and the European Union. Energy, the security of energy supply, is certainly one field where we need more experts – both academics and civil servants – for us to have a greater say in the matter. This way, we can keep our partners in the European Union up to date with our issues.

Second, old member states realised long ago that in order to have influence on the policies of the European Union, you must not merely be present, but you also need to be in key decision-making positions.

Germany, for instance, provides every citizen who has successfully competed for an EU post in the concours, but been assigned to the reserve, with a position in their own Ministry of Foreign Affairs until such time that an appropriate vacancy is found in the institutions or structures of the European Union. Even Great Britain, which some view as a half-hearted supporter of the EU, has an office subordinated to the Prime Minister, whose task is to help place British citizens in the EU institutions.

In Estonia, we still lack a structure or an institution dedicated to educating or placing Estonian citizens in medium- and high-level positions in the EU. Let us try to overcome our envy of those who find a position in Brussels or Luxembourg. We don't see this kind of envy in other member states; rather, they invest in promoting their people to EU posts. If we too start seeing things this way, talk about "them over there in Brussels" deciding for us will begin to evaporate.

Third. Estonia serves her own interests best co-operating with other EU countries. Nearly all foreign policy issues that we consider important will actually be solved primarily in the context of the European Union. This means that we must engage our diplomatic resources with maximum efficiency in the most influential member states. This will pay off. Our experience from last spring is the proof of that. Addressing issues of, for instance, competition policy, free movement of services or the so-called internal market package, we must do a huge amount of work with our colleagues from other European Union countries.

Fourth, more and more is expected of Estonia. We indeed are right to be pleased that

Estonia's GDP per capita has reached approximately the level of Portugal. That said, we must also keep in mind that in proportion to GDP, Portugal's expenditure on foreign aid is more than double of Estonia's. The solidarity with Estonia that we experienced at the EU-Russia summit in Samara in May last year cuts both ways. If we want others to help us, we must also help others. We are no longer too poor. Now we are obligated to help others more.

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Today, I have not addressed relations with our eastern neighbour. Considering Russia's on-going election campaign, it is hard to know what to say. When leading Russian sociologists believe election success requires the creation of an „external enemy”, and if at the moment that enemy happens to be Estonia, I conclude this is not the best time for dialogue.

For the same reason, we should take whatever is said or thought of us east of our border with greater composure. This is also a request: let us focus on those issues less likely to find their way into the yellow press, but which are, in their dullness or complexity, far more important for Estonia.

We must, however give serious thought to what Estonia has accomplished. Where would we be now without all those efforts? Look at the European Union's neighborhood. This is why I consider Estonia's steps in foreign policy of the past 17 years not as inevitable – for that certainly was not the case – but still the only possible course of action.

If we were not members of NATO today, but still aspiring to membership, with the current international environment our chances to get in would be worse than they were five, seven, or even ten years ago. Had we not worked so hard for membership in the European Union, we would not have today the protective shield of Schengen, or the support of the European Union in times of difficulty.

Yet as I have underlined several times, all this belongs to the past. Today, we need new way of doing things. I sincerely hope that we can muster the necessary wisdom, strength, and resources to do so.

Just as we did 88 years ago here in Tartu, when Estonia stepped on to the international stage.