

Dear citizens of the Republic of Estonia,
good friends.

I would like to congratulate everyone who will receive certificates confirming that you belong among the citizens of the Republic of Estonia today.

For many of you, this event does not signify a new life or a new beginning. It is more like getting to the end of a road, carrying out a decision that was made earlier.

Now you can all decide for yourselves how you wish to use the new opportunities that being a citizen of the Republic of Estonia offers you.

Some of you think that the right to go and vote in the European Parliament elections is all you need.

Some of you want to get actively involved in political life and stand as a candidate in local government elections this autumn or the Riigikogu elections in two years' time.

Someone will go and serve in the Defence Forces of Estonia.

Someone will choose not to vote, not to stand as a candidate and not to join the Defence Forces.

Someone will join the Estonian national team and represent our country in international competitions.

Someone will start working in a state agency, which requires for the person to be a citizen of Estonia.

None of these choices depends on the state of Estonia, the President or the members of the current government.

You are free citizens of a free state and you can make these choices yourselves.

But I hope that your decision to become a citizen of Estonia means that you have made a choice that is far more important than the rights and actions associated with the citizenship of any country.

I am talking about self-determination or selecting one's identity, or to be more precise – deciding in favour of an additional or supplementary identity.

We are all a blend of different identities: we belong to our families, our home regions, our friends and colleagues, our nation. And above all – or at the bottom of it all, if you prefer – we belong to some country or state.

For example, I am a resident of Mulgimaa, a state official, a person interested in politics, books

and music, an Estonian and a citizen of Estonia. The people in whom all these identities live in harmony and complement each other feel perfect.

I hope that the identity of a citizen of Estonia will bring you joy and make you feel like you belong here, irrespective of nationality or native language.

This identity, this inner recognition, will not falter when our politicians lose sight of the Estonia that we all dream about and instead, we have to witness ugly score-settling over some insignificant little victories that will soon be forgotten by everyone but themselves.

This inner sense of belonging is familiar to all sports fans whose unconditional love of their favourite teams does not diminish even after the most embarrassing defeat.

It is possible if we focus on what is important. It is possible if we understand what the state of Estonia is, what its values are and what it gives the people who live here.

Estonia is a family of open and good people. It is a fortress for its people and a kind and considerate host to its guests.

Today, you became members of this family, members whose opinions are important and whose concerns matter, and who is also responsible for this family, our state of Estonia, lasting over time.

Thank you.