

## **Speech by President of the Riigikogu Lauri Hussar on the 141st anniversary of the Estonian flag**

### **Flag of Estonia 141 (4 June 2025)**

Good morning, dear celebrators! I am glad to meet again with all of you who have come here today to, so to speak, wake up our birthday child with a song!

And the symbol that unites us all has risen with our joyful song all over Estonia. It has been raised here as well, on the flagpole on top of the historic Tall Hermann Tower.

On the birthdays of our blue, black and white flag, the unique story of our flag is always told. And we all know that Estonia is the only country in the world where we not only know the names of the people who made the first flag, but where the first flag itself still exists, and is kept as a relic in the Estonian National Museum. Therefore, I am not going to repeat today the facts we all very well know about the birth, growth and temporary obscurity of our flag, and its resurrection when the occupation ended.

Instead, I would like to highlight our opportunities for displaying these beautiful colours, our wonderful flag, even better and more beautifully than ever before. Twenty years ago, the Riigikogu passed the Estonian Flag Act – so there is one more small anniversary connected with our flag. This law gives detailed instructions for the use of our national flag and ethnic flag, and it has served us well. The legislature has also designated around twenty days in a calendar year as flag days. Is this too many or too few? Or is this just as much as we need?

Our Parliament, the Riigikogu, is currently debating possible amendments to the list of days of national importance and flag days, but we already know that everyone has the opportunity and the right to decorate their home with the national flag every day if they so wish. Many citizens make use of that possibility. And they do so without any national campaign carried out by the Government. They do this simply because their heart tells them to do this.

However, there are many places where homeowners and public authorities do not reach, and this is particularly true for our public spaces: town squares, avenues, and highways. In short, there are many places where we could display our flag prominently if we wished. The beauty of the Estonian flag should be enjoyed as often as possible. We could well think of solutions, for example, for Viru Square in Tallinn, that would help create the sense of security that our blue, black and white tricolour offers for every person in our country, as well as for foreigners staying at the Viru Hotel.

By the way, a small step in the development of our flag culture happened just recently – the Association of Flag Guards of Estonian Schools was founded right here at Toompea, and these flag guards with their school flags grace both our flag ceremony today and the Independence Day flag ceremony on 24 February.

Soon we will have the Song and Dance Festival, where, in addition to our national costumes and cornflowers, our flags could also be prominently displayed. I call on you, good people, to make suggestions in which places – from Toompea to Võru County and Valga County – our flag could and should be boldly used!

I have had the honourable privilege of being a member of the jury that selects Estonia's "Village of the Year", and in connection with that, I have travelled far and wide, to many places, from Lake Peipus to Sõrve Peninsula. And I have had the opportunity to see how

beautifully, tenderly and respectfully, as well as expressively and decoratively, our flag is kept in our villages.

I know that Estonian people do not accept state-run patriotism and strained campaigns. This is why today I do not want to put pressure on the Government or the Riigikogu to promote our flag culture at state level in any way. On the contrary, my speech today is meant for all of us, to ourselves. So that we could think about it in our spare moments and perhaps come up with some beautiful results. Happy Flag Day, and may there be blue-black-whiteness in your hearts!