

RESTORATION OF THE STATEHOOD OF ESTONIA and THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN IT

All in all, the contribution of the local government to the restoration of our state can be treated in the following subject fields:

- 1) the first national legislative acts, considering that Estonia was the first country in transition in this field;
- 2) establishment of democratic elections and organisation of the first (almost) free elections after half a century;
- 3) affording the status of local government which ensured the capability and opportunities to organise local life in the whole territory of Estonia;
- 4) restoration of the original institutions liquidated in summer 1940;
- 5) contribution of each rural municipality or city to the restoration of independence.

September 2021

In Tallinn (Estonia)

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P.S.:

As the chief editor (M.R.), I would add some comments in connection with the events of 30 years ago:

- Independence of the Republic of Estonia was restored on 20 August 1991. The coup d'état attempt which had started in Moscow on 18 August with the aim of removing Mikhail Gorbachev from power after he had “sent on holiday” to Crimea, was an important factor. Armoured combat vehicles were deployed to Tallinn from Pskov in addition to the Soviet Army units already there. The capital city made preparations for the defence of the most essential buildings (parliament, government, radio building, TV tower, TV building and several others) and thousands of people surrounded these buildings. Fortunately, the then Soviet Army chief in Tallinn, Admiral Belov (who had also been elected as a member of the Tallinn City Council in December 1989) did not support the army units which arrived here, and there was an important factor – President of the Russian Federation Boris Yeltsin opposed the conspirators in Moscow. The armed vehicles of the Soviet Army which had arrived started to move back to Pskov on 21 August. The coup d'état attempt failed, as is known, and M. Gorbachev returned to Moscow. The actions of B. Yeltsin had an important role in the restoration of the independence of our state in addition to the bravery of our local population (inhabitants of rural municipalities and cities) which culminated with the adoption of the decision to restore the independence of our state in the evening of 20 August by the parliament of that time (the Supreme Council).

In his congratulations on the Anniversary of Regaining of Independence of Estonia, the former Financial Director of the Liviko Production Group, Tiit Õim¹ reminded the chief editor of the practical training in production conducted in Estonian enterprises 30 years ago for

¹ Tiit Õim is a fellow student of Matti Raudjärv from the times of the Tallinn University of Technology, a long-time friend and a good friend of the family.

German students of the Kiel University of Applied Sciences (e-mail: 20 August 2021). About ten students took the practical training, one of them a female student at the Liviko Production Group. Tiit visited a Liviko subsidiary, the Rakvere Distillery with the visitor during the Russian *coup d'état* on 20 August 1991. At the same time a landing military convoy moved on another route, along Tartu Road from Pskov to Tallinn City.

- The day before, the Liviko delegation had visited the Government of the Republic of Estonia on Toompea Hill and delivered the letter of support from their staff, also the visitor had been taken along (the street leading to Toompea Hill had already been fortified with large rocks). The student had been very excited as German students had unexpectedly turned out to be in the centre of important events.

The situation at Rakvere was peaceful, without particular news. When listening to the radio on the way back to Tallinn, Tiit had told also the German student about the current events, including in Moscow, which made people very anxious at first. But when they arrived in Tallinn from Rakvere they found that the parents of the students had already arranged the departure of students in the evening to Helsinki by ferry and from there back to Germany. The situation was unexpected and risky after all.

Later, when people from Liviko visited Kiel, the student who had had practical training at Liviko organised a festive dinner at a manor near Kiel for the Estonian guests. As her father worked as a game warden at the manor, he had shot a roe deer for the dinner – to thank Estonian people for the good reception.

- And congratulations on the anniversary from a good German colleague Professor Dr. Eckhard Freyer in Bonn (e-mail: 21.08.2021).²

27 August 2021
At Pirita-Kose in Tallinn
Matti Raudjärvi (M. R.)

² <https://www.visitestonia.com/de/uber-estland/estland-feiert-30-jahre-wiedererlangung-der-unabhangigkeit>

Prof. Dr Eckhard Freyer was a Professor of Finances for many years at the University of Merseburg and has now retired, lives in Bonn and is a big fan of choir singing. We have become acquainted at conferences in Crimea. Eckhard has also participated in our conference of economic policy at Värska and published a paper in our earlier collection.