

Estonian Review

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FOREIGN NEWS



Foreign Minister Paet with South Korean Prime Minister Chung Un-chan, 13 January.

Paet and South Korean Prime Minister Discuss Trade, Bilateral Relations

13 January - **At his meeting in Seoul today with South Korean Prime Minister Chung Un-chan, Foreign Minister Urmas Paet said that the free trade agreement coming into effect between the European Union and South Korea will help to intensify economic and trade relations between Estonia and South Korea.** "South Korea is one of the European Union's strategic partners, and this agreement coming into effect creates good circumstances for substantially enlivening co-operation," said the Estonian foreign minister. Prime Minister Chung Un-chan expressed hope that South Korean investments in Estonia would increase as a result of the agreement.

Paet stated that the Republic of Korea belongs to the group of nations with whom developing economic and trade relations is especially important in the name of increasing the European Union's competitiveness.

Prime Minister Un-chang gave an overview of the plans for South Korea's G20 chairmanship during this year.

While talking about Estonia-South Korea relations, Prime Minister Un-chan and Foreign Minister Paet said that both nations share liberal and democratic values. Un-chan noted that both South Korea and Estonia, which are known as nations with highly advanced information technology, have experts with top-level know-how and that co-operation in the IT realm should certainly be intensified.

The South Korean prime minister expressed interest in Estonia's work to protect the Baltic Sea environment and invited Estonia to participate in the EXPO taking place in Yeosu, South Korea in 2012.

Today Foreign Minister Urmas Paet also met with the directors of LG Electronics and Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering. Last year LG Electronics was recognised as the most environmentally-friendly business among the 100 biggest organisations in South Korea.

FOREIGN NEWS

Estonian Support for Victims of Haiti Earthquake Over 255 Thousand EUR

18 January - **Today the European Union development ministers agreed on the co-ordinated activity of the European Union to help the victims of the Haiti earthquake over the next few weeks and months.** The contribution of the European Commission and member states thus far totals 122 million euros. Estonia's contribution so far is close to 4 million kroons (255 645 EUR).

Foreign Minister Urmas Paet stated that Estonia's contribution to help the victims of the Haiti earthquake totals 3.9 million kroons. "Of this total, 2.5 million is financial aid through the Red Cross, and to send experts to the crisis region to help we are contributing 350 000 kroons to the IT experts and 1 million kroons to the aid mission of the logistics experts," said Paet. "Estonia's final contribution will be known when the missions of our experts come to an end. The role of the logistics experts sent from Estonia is to help co-ordinate arrivals, and their mission may be extended depending on developments in Haiti," Paet emphasised.

Gert Teder, a member of the Estonian Rescue Service, was among the European Union evaluation team that travelled to Haiti on Wednesday, 13 January. The purpose of the team, sent within the framework of the civil protection mechanism, is to evaluate the needs of those who have been injured and co-ordinate the arriving aid. The European Union evaluation team sent to Haiti includes representatives from six nations.

Foreign Minister Paet emphasised that in order for the aid being contributed to reach those who need it in Haiti, the international community must work in close co-operation. "It is necessary to get rapid aid that is also well co-ordinated to the victims of the earthquake. Since there is a need to co-ordinate the aid activities of European Union countries, an extraordinary meeting of the European Union development ministers took place today in Brussels," he noted. "The co-operation of the Dominican Republic in helping to facilitate international aid is also very important," Paet added.

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Haiti

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The Commission also announced that it will contribute 200 million euros to meet long-term development aid needs for re-building Haiti. Another topic separately discussed at the meeting of the development ministers of the European Union was the co-ordinated co-operation of member states and the Commission with other international organisations, including the UN, which has taken on the co-ordinating role in Haiti.

Logistics Experts From Estonia Sent to Help Co-ordinate Efforts in Haiti

19 January (BNS) - **Estonia dispatched another four members of its rescue team to earthquake-stricken Haiti to provide IT and logistic support in the disaster area.**

In addition to the members of the rescue team who will go to the disaster area in the framework of an international human partnership (IHP) mission, IT specialist Indrek Juhanson will also go to Haiti, a spokesman for the Rescue Board said. It will be Juhanson's duty to ensure IT and communication support to the UN crises and catastrophes co-operation and assessment team.

The World Food Programme asked the IHP to set up a field camp in Haiti that will ensure accommodation and working conditions for 200 UN humanitarian assistance workers. The components of the base camp will come from the IHP countries of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Estonia. In addition, a team including three Estonian logistics specialists will go to Haiti to put up and manage the camp.

Interior Minister Marko Pomerants said the IT training and equipment of the Estonian rescue team permitted providing information and communication services even in very complicated catastrophe conditions. "Previously our IT specialists have successfully taken part in three support missions - in Albania, Namibia and Indonesia." Two members of the rescue team Estonia sent to quake-ravaged Haiti have already gotten to work and three logistics experts reached the crisis area on Tuesday morning. The three experts spent Monday in the airport of the neighbouring Dominican Republic's capital Santo Domingo looking for an opportunity to continue their journey, a spokesman for the Rescue Board said. They reached their destination on Tuesday morning.

The Estonian Disaster Relief Team's IT specialist Indrek Juhanson arrived in the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince around noon and started work at the on-site operations co-ordination centre (OSOCC) tackling IT and communications solutions. "Indrek's task is to make sure the OSOCC has a network of its own so people can communicate with each other and the outside world," the Rescue Board spokesman said.

EDRT member Gert Teder, who arrived in Haiti earlier with the European Union assessment team, continues work at the Port-au-Prince airport from which evacuation flights are to start on Tuesday.

Lack of water and food, people left without shelter, diminishing fuel supply, marauding, and burying the dead remain the principal challenges the Haitian capital is faced with, the Rescue Board spokesman said.

Estonian UN Worker Saved in Haitian Capital

14 January (BNS) - **A 35-year-old Estonian man, Tarmo Jõeveer, was freed from the rubble of the United Nations' headquarters in the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince early on Thursday.** UN chief Ban Ki-moon, in televised remarks on Thursday, described the saving of the Estonian as "a small miracle."

That the Estonian was freed Thursday morning means that he spent more than a day under rubble after the devastating quake hit shortly before 5 p.m. local time on Tuesday.

Jõeveer, who according to news agencies is a police officer working with the UN, was transferred to an Argentinean hospital in Port-au-Prince, AFP said.

CNN on Thursday evening showed Jõeveer being pulled out of the rubble of the UN headquarters by a specialised US rescue team from Virginia. Despite being shaken, he appeared to have had a miraculous escape as he climbed swiftly down from the ruins, punching the air in triumph, smiling and hugging his rescuers.

"I lost my footing and I was lying on the floor, that was it," Jõeveer said. "It wasn't good," he admitted tersely, asked about the long hours he spent trapped under mountains of concrete, where some 150 UN workers were still missing.

The Virginia team, who arrived with 43 tons of relief supplies and equipment, were among the first wave of a massive international aid operation swinging into place for the devastated nation.

At least 22 UN staffers were killed in the Haiti quake and some 150 were still missing. Brazil's army said 14 of its soldiers were among the dead.

The headquarters for the UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti, a five-story building, collapsed in the massive earthquake. UN peacekeeping chief Alain Le Roy told reporters on Wednesday that "as we speak, no one has been rescued from this main headquarters."

The Estonian Foreign Ministry said it was informed about the Estonian citizen in Haiti by the citizen's relatives.

Germany Supports Estonia's Euro Aspirations

13 January - **Prime Minister Andrus Ansip met with German Foreign Minister Guido Westerweller, who was on a short stop in Estonia on the way from Berlin to Tokyo.** The main topic of the meeting was Estonia's activities towards joining the euro zone. Westerwelle highly appreciated the efforts of Estonia to meet the Maastricht criteria and expressed the political support of Germany to Estonia joining the euro zone.

Prime Minister Ansip introduced in greater detail the conservative budget policy of Estonia, thanks to which essential reserves have been collected for Estonia. "Estonia is a small country, where we have managed to keep our finances in order. Our external sovereign debt in 2008 was one of the lowest in the European Union: 4.6 percent of GDP," he said. Ansip noted that due to the conservative budget policy, Estonia quickly managed to acclimatise in the crisis

situation as well. "All these efforts allow for hoping that we fulfil our goal of joining the euro zone as of 1 January next year," said the prime minister. The German foreign minister stated that although the decision on Estonia joining the euro has not been made yet and is mainly up to the institutions of the European Union, Estonia can count on political support from Germany.

At the meeting, Estonia's candidacy to become the home country of the IT agency was also considered. The prime minister stressed that the establishment of a new agency for managing the IT systems of the field of justice and internal affairs is important in Estonia's opinion. According to the prime minister, the establishment of the agency in Estonia would not bring about disproportionately high financial obligations for the EU; rather, the non-establishment of the agency may mean higher expenses for the field in the future. The decision on the establishment of the agency should be made during the Spanish Presidency.



Prime Minister Andrus Ansip with German Foreign Minister Guido Westerweller at Stenbock House, 13 January.

Agricultural Minister Meets with Russian Deputy Prime Minister in Berlin

16 January (BNS) - **Estonian Agriculture Minister Helir-Valdor Seeder met with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov and Agriculture Minister Yelena Skrynnik in Berlin for the first time since the restoration of independence.**

The Russian senior officials extended to Seeder an invitation to pay a visit to Moscow in order to discuss the development of bilateral relations in the agricultural sphere and sign a respective co-operation memorandum.

"Russia has always been an important trade partner for Estonia in terms of food products, but co-operation on the national level has been modest so far," said Seeder, adding that Friday's high-level meeting promised improvement of co-operation.

Further co-operation between the two countries will pertain above all to the import and export of food products as well as fishery issues. The high-level working group to be set up on the basis of the co-operation memorandum to be signed in Moscow would in the future meet at least once a month and it would be possible to consult within its framework on topical issues in the sphere of trade as well.

In addition, the general situation of agriculture during the global economic recession and the importance of the 75th edition of the world's biggest food fair, Grüne Woche in Berlin, were also discussed.

No Estonian agricultural minister has ever met with either with a Russian deputy foreign minister or agricultural minister.

Estonian Guild in London Begins Its Activities

19 January - **Ambassador of Estonia to the United Kingdom Margus Laidre opened the seminar of the London Estonian Guild, which brings together Estonian entrepreneurs and enterprising people.** The seminar is focusing on co-operation between Estonia and the United Kingdom in various sectors and its development.

The ambassador stated that frequently Estonians are by nature solitary workers, while at the same time realising that one cannot break through in the world without co-operating. "The Estonian Guild working in London is a significant example of this sort of co-operation," he stated. "Let's not forget the simple but harsh truth in today's world—if people can't see you, you don't exist," Laidre added.

In addition to the ambassador, other participants in the event include the tax policy counsellor of the British HM Treasury Aili Nurk, head of the Estonian contingent in Great Britain and Northern Ireland Lieutenant Commander Peeter Ivask, and director of the innovative business Realeyes Mihkel Jäätma.

The Estonian Guild in London is a network created by local Estonians with the support of the Estonian Embassy and Enterprise Estonia, which brings together active Estonians in the British Isles. The goal of the guild is to meet regularly, to exchange information, experiences and contacts, and to encourage and help fellow countrymen who wish to become active in business in the United Kingdom. The guild meets once a month.

The Estonian Guild in London has its own webpage <http://gild.edicypages.com/>, and you can contact the organisation at the address estigildlondonis@gmail.com.

DOMESTIC NEWS

Estonia Retains Spot Among Free Countries in Fresh Freedom House Rankings

13 January (BNS) - **The New York-based Freedom House once again ranked Estonia among Free countries in its fresh annual survey of political rights and civil liberties, Freedom in the World 2010.**

Estonia's political rights score was 1, just like its civil liberties score. Freedom House gave countries from one to seven points in these two categories, with the countries seen as offering the greatest freedoms to their residents getting one point.

Estonia scored one point in both categories just like most other European Union member states. Latvia, however, was given 2 for political rights and 1 for civil liberties. Lithuania's scores were 1 and 1, just like Estonia's. Russia's political rights score was 6 and civil liberties score 5, putting it in the Not Free category.

The number of countries designated by Freedom in the World as Free in 2009 stands at 89, representing 46% of the world's 194 countries and 46% of the world population.

The number of Partly Free countries declined to 58, or 30% of all countries assessed by the survey, comprising 20% of the world's total population.

The number of countries deemed to be Not Free increased to 47. Over 2.3 billion people live in societies where fundamental political rights and civil liberties are not respected. China accounts for half of this number.

Freedom House said that for the fourth consecutive year, global declines in freedom outweighed gains in 2009. This represents the longest continuous period of decline for global freedom since 1972 when the report started to be compiled. "The news for 2009 is cause for real concern," said Arch Puddington, Freedom House Director of Research.

In this year's findings, five countries moved into Not Free status, and the number of electoral democracies declined to the lowest level since 1995. The countries moving into Not Free status were Bahrain, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Yemen.

Sixteen countries made notable gains, with two countries improving their overall freedom status. The most significant improvements in 2009 occurred in Asia.

DEFENCE NEWS

Head of Estonian Guard Battalion Awarded US Army Commendation Medal

15 January (BNS) - **Robert W. Shaefer, the US Army attaché in Estonia, Friday decorated commander of the Guard Battalion Maj. Toomas Väli with a US Army commendation medal.**

The US Army decorated Maj. Väli for his participation in the Iraq mission, where Väli served as head of the Estonian contingent in 2004 and 2008, the Defence Forces headquarters said.

The attaché presented the medal at a festive line-up marking the anniversary of the Guard Battalion in the presence of US and Estonian officers as well as Col. Jukka Valkeajärvi, commander of the Finnish Guard Regiment, and Maj. Markko Maanluotto, commandant of the Helsinki garrison.

Major Väli thanked the US attaché and remembered the present forerunners of the Guard Battalion. "Let us remember those thanks to whom we can stand here in Estonian uniforms under the Estonian flag and mark the anniversary of the Guard Battalion," Major Väli said.

In addition to the battalion commander, several conscripts of the military police company were either promoted to corporal or were given letters of thanks.

The US Army commendation medal is awarded to thank another country's soldiers who stand out by a heroic act, an exceptional achievement or exemplary service that has brought mutual benefit both to the United States as well as to the soldier's country.

ECONOMIC NEWS

Parks of Nelja Energia Produce 64 Percent of Wind Energy

14 January (BNS) - **Wind parks operated by the renewable energy producer Nelja Energia generated 110 gigawatt-hours of electricity**

last year which makes up 64% of the total produced in Estonia in 2009.

According to data of the transmission grid operator Elering, wind parks fed 172 GWh of electricity into the power system last year.

The head of Nelja Energia, Martin Kruus, explained to BNS that year 2009 was generally speaking a poor year in terms of wind and the output fell short of projections.

The Pakri wind farm, for instance, whose capacity is 18.4 megawatt, last year generated 37.77 GWh of electricity, which is 27% less than a year earlier.

Nonetheless, Nelja Energia had a busy year, Kruus said, as the company installed three new wind parks -- the 16-megawatt Tooma and nine-megawatt Vanaküla in Estonia and the 14-megawatt Sudenai in Lithuania.

Nelja Energia also started the construction of the 6.9-megawatt Virtsu III in Estonia, which will be completed in the first quarter of this year. The Mockiai wind farm in Lithuania, with a capacity of 12 megawatt, is scheduled to be finished in the third quarter.

Nelja Energia is also developing a project for a large offshore wind farm near the island of Hiiumaa. In addition to the projects mentioned above, the company will this year continue work on the 24-megawatt Aseri wind park in West-Viru County and a six-megawatt wind farm at Kunda on the northern coast.

The company is developing in co-operation with the national power utility Eesti Energia a wind farm with a capacity of 52 megawatt at Paldiski.

Estonian Air to Start Vilnius-Amsterdam Flights in February

13 January (BNS) - **The national carrier Estonian Air will for the first time ever start flying between capital cities of two foreign countries, launching on Feb. 12 the Vilnius-Amsterdam route on code-sharing basis with KLM Royal Dutch Airlines.**

"This is for us a landmark event for two reasons: we're starting flights outside Estonia for the first time and our principal strategic partner so far, SAS, will be joined by KLM," Estonian Air president and CEO Andrus Aljas said.

The co-operation of Estonian Air and KLM that started in spring 2009 when the Estonian carrier launched flights on the Tallinn-Amsterdam route has proven successful and the parties decided to deepen it. Estonian Air and KLM signed the agreement on co-operation on Vilnius-Amsterdam-Vilnius flights this week.

During the winter season the airline will be making six instead of the current three weekly flights on the Tallinn-Amsterdam route with a stopover in Vilnius. The flights will take place on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays.

In summer Estonian Air will resume direct flights between Tallinn and Amsterdam, continuing direct flights on both the Tallinn-Amsterdam and the Vilnius-Amsterdam route.

Development Fund Looks at Ways to Improve Prospects as Financial Services Exporter

19 January (BNS) - **A monitoring survey presented by the Development Fund in the**

parliament's financial committee on Tuesday deals with the outlooks of financial services in Estonia and opportunities for the export of these services.

The chairman of the standing committee, Taavi Rõivas, said in his remarks to BNS that among the ideas surveyed was one looking at whether Estonia could serve as a provider of back office services in the financial world. Also talked about was the expertise the country can offer in investing in the financial markets of central and Eastern Europe.

Numerous problems need to be solved first, however, to strengthen the position of Estonia in the financial world. These include creating more air connections from Tallinn and having a good English-language school.

"You mustn't underestimate the importance of social infrastructure," Rõivas said.

CULTURAL NEWS

Short Story by Mati Unt Receives High Recognition in USA

16 January (BNS) - **A short story by the Estonian author Mati Unt, "Brecht at Night", was chosen as one of the 25 best translated literary works in the United States and this is seen as a breakthrough of Estonian literature to the world market, the daily Postimees wrote.**

The choice by one of the biggest book wholesale chains, Barnes and Noble, is extraordinary because never before have Estonian books been included on the list.

According to Postimees, Unt's path to recognition started about five years ago, when representatives of Dalkey Archive Press came to Estonia at the invitation of the Estonian Literature Information Center (EKT). After meeting with literary critics and getting acquainted with the materials of the information centre, they said that Unt was the author they wished to start publishing.

EKT Director Ilvi Liive told the daily that Barnes and Noble had been the biggest bookseller in the United States and the choice of the best books was made by professionals who were not only book wholesalers but also published them. "As only two percent of the book market in America is books of translated fiction, being picked as one of the top 25 is a big breakthrough," Liive said.

Kerti Tergem, head of the foreign communication at the center, said that Unt was the first who managed to break through in America.

Foreign Ministry Cultural Stipends Awarded to Tiit Ojasoo and Imbi Paju

15 January - **Today Foreign Minister Urmas Paet presented Foreign Ministry cultural stipends to two creative Estonians—author, director and journalist Imbi Paju and theatre director Tiit Ojasoo.**

Foreign Minister Paet stated that Imbi Paju and Tiit Ojasoo have made a significant contribution to successfully presenting Estonia's society and culture abroad. "We wish to recognise both of these creative individuals—as a result of their valuable artistic and intellectual work, many more people abroad know about Estonia's society and history," stated Foreign Minister Paet.

Tiit Ojasoo is a respected Estonian theatre director who views social life and the events therein

with a critical eye. Ojasoo's production "ГЭП—Garjatšije estonskije parni" has participated in many theatre festivals abroad. The production has travelled outside of Estonia more than any other Estonian production. In March of 2009 the production took the stage at the Russian theatre festival "Golden Mask" and in May at the a/d Werf festival in Utrecht, the Netherlands. In 2008 performances were given in Cologne, Oldenburg, St. Petersburg, Tampere, Wiesbaden, Vienna, Torun, and Bern, and in 2007 in Poniewiez, Lithuania.

Imbi Paju attempts to look to the future by talking about the past, since the way to a healthier society is by examining its painful areas. Imbi Paju examines history primarily through emotions. In 2009 Imbi Paju premiered her historical-psychological documentary film "Sisters Across the Gulf of Finland". It premiered in Helsinki, Tallinn and Brussels. Paju's film talks about the experiences of Estonian and Finnish women through the events of the 1930s, the Second World War, and the Soviet occupation. In 2005 Paju's documentary film "Memories Denied" was released, which describes two sisters growing up among Stalinism, Soviet occupation and terror, where suppressing one's memories was the only form of self-defence. In March of 2009, a compilation of articles created in co-operation by Imbi Paju and Sofi Oksanen entitled "Fear Behind Us All" was published on the 60th anniversary of the Estonian deportations.

SPORTS NEWS

Veerpalu Finishes Second in FIS Cross Country World Cup 15 km Race in Otepää

16 January (BNS) - **Estonia's Andrus Veerpalu won second place in the FIS cross-country men's 15 km classical race in Otepää, Estonia on Saturday.** Czech Lukas was first and Estonia's Jaak Mae third.

Veerpalu, double world champion and twice Olympic gold medal winner, arrived second in the finish 16.9 seconds after Bauer; Jaak Mae finished 26 seconds later than Veerpalu after a powerful spurt.

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