



Address by H.E. Steingrímur J. Sigfússon, Speaker of Althingi – the Parliament of Iceland, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the restoration of the independence of Estonia, Tallinn August 20th 2021.

Excellencies, distinguished guests!

I welcome the opportunity to attend the events today in your beautiful capital Tallinn, commemorating this important milestone in the history of the Republic of Estonia. I would also like to express my gratitude to Speaker Jüri Ratas and the Riigikogu for the invitation.

I clearly remember the historic events three decades ago. I was a young member of Althingi and a minister in the government of Iceland during the turbulent times leading to restored independence of Estonia and the other Baltic republics.

In 1918, both Iceland and Estonia became sovereign and independent nations, along with your Baltic neighbours, Latvia, and Lithuania. Our destinies have therefore been interlinked, although your independence was suppressed for decades.

Iceland was for a long time the smallest member of the United Nations, in terms of population. Support for other smaller states, advocating a rule based international system and respect for human rights has therefore been a natural cornerstone in Iceland's foreign policy.

Iceland's acknowledgement of Estonia's independence was never withdrawn during decades of Soviet rule, as reiterated in a parliamentary resolution in support of the Baltic independence struggle, passed unanimously in Althingi in December 1990. The following year, August 26th 1991, Iceland became the first country to establish diplomatic relations with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Thirty years have passed since Estonia regained its rightful place as a sovereign and democratic state in the family of nations. With firm basis in your history and culture, supported by the will and dedication of your people, you have progressed immensely since the historical events thirty years ago.

Excellencies, distinguished guests!

Allow me to repeat my gratitude for the invitation and convey sincere congratulations to the people of Estonia on this important occasion from the parliament and people of Iceland.