

Dear Reader,

This special series in Estonia's only universal law journal *Juridica – Juridica International* – has reached its first noteworthy landmark – the fifth edition. This particular collection, primarily oriented toward our foreign reader, has reflected the most significant reforms taking place in the field of Estonian law since 1996. The topics discussed during previous years have included, *inter alia*, issues concerning our constitution in the context of integration into the European Union (1998) and issues related to the protection of personal rights and freedoms of the Estonian people (1999).

The keywords of this special issue are legislation and legal policy. Society's expectations of a legal system and lawyers rank high. While the process of developing legislation and presenting legislation for adoption to the parliament is well established and relatively efficient, the policy planning culture, including legal policy, has not yet reached a satisfactory level. Even today, the "best understanding" of the decision-maker frequently serves as the main argument when planning policy to an unacceptably significant extent. Analyses have often been viewed as time-consuming measures that hinder, rather than support the decision-making procedure.

However, the period of rapid decision-making seems to be nearing its end in Estonia. The new period emerging leaves us at the right time for the preparation of long-term planning activities. An understanding of the necessity to increase the level of legal development exists on a particular stratum and in particular circles in Estonia. From this derives an idea to create a model, functioning under the circumstances prevalent in Estonia, for handling of problems related to legal policy, which would combine an analysis by jurisprudence and professional expertise, as well as public interest. To establish the necessary preconditions for a satisfactory outcome, a discussion between practising lawyers, jurists, and other scholars of social sciences, accompanied by the involvement of the public will be inevitable. The pages of *Juridica* and *Juridica International*, where an open discussion could lead to consensus among jurists, would also provide an excellent opportunity thereof. Nevertheless, attainment of consensus should not become a goal *per se*, but only a means of enabling us to gain support for the practical implementation of one or any viable strategies.

Let it be noted here that from 28 September to 1 October this year, the Law Philosophy Society of Estonia and the Faculty of Law of the University of Tartu will organise an international symposium *Legislation and Legal Policy* in Tartu, in which the leading jurists from Germany, Italy and Finland will participate. We hope that the current special issue provides foundation for the discussions and dialogue to be conducted in the nearest future.

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Peep Pruks

