**Blue-black-and-white flag felt with all senses**

Speech on the occasion of the 105th anniversary of the republic of Estonia, 24 February 2023

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Dear friends!

We are gathered here around the Tall Hermann Tower on the anniversary of the Republic of Estonia for the 35th time since 1989. At sunrise, we turn our heads up to see the blue-black-and-white flag rising up the pole as we sing our national anthem.

When we pass the Tall Hermann on other days of the year, our eyes always look for the cherished flag at the top of this tower. A few fractions of a second are enough to see – everything is all right, we are free!

Besides sight, God has given us four more senses to experience the world. How to perceive the colours of our flag – blue, black and white – with all five senses?

Today, at this crisp wintery early morning hour, I am thinking of the bliss of a dark August night when, listening to the song of crickets, you can put a couple of blackberries into your mouth, breathe the fresh air of the blue sea into your lungs and look for brightly sparkling falling stars in the black night sky. This is how I imagine the blue-black-and-white flag felt with all senses.

Everybody can weave together their own blue-black-and-white moments felt with their senses. There are enough moments for all seasons, for all places in Estonia, and for the hearts of all people who love Estonia. This is the freedom we are celebrating today.

I am praying for Estonia, but I am also wishing and asking God today to help Ukrainian people keep their beloved blue-and-yellow freedom. We need to conquer evil to attain agreeable peace.

May Almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, bless this flag, and our free country and its leaders and people. Amen.