Chancellor’s Year in Review 2023/2024

Chancellor’s Year in Review

Dear Reader

Every year, a cross-section of concerns of the Estonian people and a number of broader constitutional law problems reaches the Chancellor of Justice’s desk. It continues to be the goal of the entire Chancellor’s Office to resolve matters and not just dryly process them; to create clarity, not noise; to reduce the number of conflicts in society; to strive towards balance and reasonableness – in order to make Estonia better within the limits of our powers and abilities. Just as the Constitution requires: we must work to ensure that Estonia is a good place to live in for present and future generations. It is for you to decide whether and how we have succeeded in doing so.

At the conclusion of this reporting year, there is again reason to thank the Riigikogu and the officials who have made an effort to resolve people’s concerns. For example, at the request of the Chancellor of Justice, the Riigikogu amended the Health Insurance Act so that, with the support of the care allowance, a parent can stay with their child for a longer period if the child’s effective medical treatment so requires. A vital concern of children, parents and paediatricians was thus resolved. Decision-makers are aware of the shortage of psychologists, speech therapists and other specialists supporting a child’s development, and in some areas the problem has been slightly alleviated. Unfortunately, the Chancellor still receives complaints about a child not receiving the necessary support in a kindergarten or school.

For example, a child was left without a support person at school in the middle of the school year and was thus excluded from school. The child's need for assistance was clear to everyone, but there was disagreement as to whether it was a social service to be provided by the municipality or whether the responsibility lay with the education system. On the advice of the Chancellor of Justice, a solution was found. A similar situation can be seen in other areas, such as supporting the subsistence and employment of people with disabilities. A person must not be left without the necessary assistance or be forced to go endlessly from door to door simply because the authorities are arguing with each other about the division of work and money. Good administrative practice requires a person-based approach.

It is fair to say that most parents, teachers, doctors, child protection workers, judges and officials do their work with dedication and are guided by what is in a child's best interests. Children are parents' most precious asset and of society as a whole. We must all do our utmost to ensure that no child has to experience lack of consideration or unfair, undignified or violent treatment – this is the responsibility of every adult. Unfortunately, there are also those who are unable to shoulder this responsibility. For example, we receive numerous reports that no place at a kindergarten or school has been provided, that a child's load exceeds what is allowed, that a school shuns a young person with learning difficulties, or that one parent badmouths the other parent in front of the child.

Children and young people also prepared a report for the UN on the situation of children and young people in Estonia, in which the Children's and Youth Rights Department of the Chancellor's Office offered them support. The views of children in alternative care and children who fled to Estonia from Ukraine were also heard and taken into account. The Chancellor's Office arranged a translation into Estonian of the summary of General Comment No 26 of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. This summary for children explains children's right to live in a clean and healthy environment now and in the future. The summary was translated and illustrated by the young people themselves.

In Estonia, too, the issue of nature conservation and stopping global warming has been turned into a battlefield, where expressing different beliefs, rights and interests and finding a constitutional balance is becoming increasingly difficult. However, it is clear that no fundamental right, interest or purpose can nor should automatically be given priority over others. Neither internal security, national security, nature conservation, stopping global warming, protecting health, a balanced budget or anything else should take precedence over others. According to the Constitution, balance must always be sought. Only this way can we

live together peacefully and sensibly as a society.

In 2023, the Chancellor of Justice presented a report, whose purpose was to show the Riigikogu, ministries and agencies, entrepreneurs and the public that Estonia has assumed fixed-term international obligations to stop climate warming, but the norms necessary for fulfilling them have mostly not been enacted in legislation. However, without clear statutory obligations and restrictions, it is not possible to achieve these goals within the framework of the Constitution. In 2024, the Ministry of Climate did submit a Draft Act on Climate-Resilient Economy for discussion. The debate on its constitutionality lies ahead.

The people have decided that the Estonian state exists for defence of internal and external peace and serves as a pledge to present and future generations for their social progress and general welfare. Under § 5 of the Constitution, the natural wealth and resources of Estonia are national riches which must be used sustainably. Climate is an inseparable part of the natural living environment of the world and of Estonia. Section 53 of the Constitution imposes a basic duty on everyone to preserve the living and natural environment. The social and economic livelihoods of present and future generations must be ensured. Climate change that leads to stronger storms, heat waves, floods and droughts poses an immediate threat to the Estonian people.

Constitutional principles and basic duties to protect the environment may justify restrictions on the fundamental rights of individuals, such as the freedom to conduct a business or the right to property. However, these restrictions must be well-considered, reasonable and fair. Crop and livestock farming, manufacturing companies, entrepreneurship in general are similarly under the protection of the Constitution. The Constitution also strongly protects property.

The Chancellor of Justice heard serious concerns from young people fighting climate warming, as well as from entrepreneurs and owners. It is important to avoid a quarrel between generations. It is hardly unlikely that anyone here knows anyone who is sincerely indifferent to the well-being of future generations and Estonia. Totalitarian-like orders and prohibitions and excessive restrictions on the fundamental rights of owners and businesses spark protest. This, in turn, can mean abandoning necessary changes, a big setback. That this may be the case is confirmed by the experience of excessive political correctness and the onslaught of a culture of cancellation: society has not become safer, extremes have arisen instead. This has now been confirmed both by election results and by theorists such as Francis Fukuyama and Slavoj Žižek. Rules-based, balance-seeking, peaceful governance will

bring desired results with greater certainty. Consensus democracy is better than pendulum democracy in terms of people's well-being and safety.

No situation or objective justifies suppression of the constitutional freedom of conscience, thought and expression. Wise decisions are born in dignified debate, where factual errors and gaps in argumentation can be pointed out. Even a difficult security situation does not justify state-imposed truth or twisting the law. Everything must be done in Estonia's long-term interests. Ultimately, a democratic state governed by the rule of law, together with the principle of separation and balance of powers, protects everyone.

During the reporting year, the question had repeatedly to be asked whether we are really witnessing the rise of thinking that better to have ten innocent people hanged rather than let one crook get away. The Constitution stipulates exactly the opposite: no one should be punished for an act that was not punishable at the time of its commission, all doubt must be interpreted in favour of the suspect. This, too, is intended to ensure a society in which freedom is the rule and restriction the exception, while restrictions are clearly known in advance, proportionate and fair.

Unfortunately, disregard for the principle of legality is becoming more widespread in all areas. According to the Constitution, the Riigikogu must clearly and in sufficient detail decide on all the most important issues, including for what purpose and how fundamental rights may be restricted and obligations imposed. Governmental and ministerial regulations may only be used to lay down the arrangements necessary to implement a law but not to dictate the actual choices that change people's lives. A law must contain norms from which it is clear what is prohibited or what is prescribed. Orders and prohibitions may only be imposed by a law but not by regulations, development plans, guidelines, or mere instructions issued at the discretion of an official.

The guarantee of fundamental rights must not be made conditional on the existence of technological solutions. Unfortunately, the last reporting year also showed that the availability, ease of use, security and functioning of e-solutions cannot be guaranteed in practice, be it for the purposes of applying for support to build a well, a scholarship, or taking an online examination. In addition to the technical difficulties that appeared during the entrance tests of Tallinn and Harju County state upper secondary schools, it turned out that, as supporting material during the online test examination of Estonian, basic school graduates were shown the combined dictionary of the *Sõnaveeb* language portal instead of the dictionary of standard Estonian (*Õigekeelussõnaraamat*), which is the basis for the standard written

language. Pupils' works are, of course, assessed on the basis of the dictionary of standard Estonian, the *Õigekeelussõnaraamat*. However, by the time the online test examination was held, it was clear that, without changing the Language Act, it would not be possible to abandon the normative *Õigekeelussõnaraamat*, which distinguishes between good and bad language use. Perhaps even changing the law is not enough because, under the Constitution, Estonian must remain the language of education, science and culture, and the cornerstone of the identity of Estonians. This is hardly possible if standard written language is no longer taught at school.

The requirement of legality protects us all, it creates a frame in which to act safely. The same is true of the Constitution. Laws can and should be changed as life progresses, if necessary, but doing it honestly; and draft laws in the Riigikogu can be scrutinised under the magnifier of the 101 life experiences of its members and, if necessary, amended. It is the representation of the people, not anyone else, who is responsible for passing laws.

The idea of the Constitution is to prevent rash decisions which have not been well considered, the Constitution may not be drained of substance as a result of interpretation on the spur of the moment. Initiatives to this end could be quite successfully prevented during the reporting year. The Constitution protects us against mistakes and has served Estonia well.

The Chancellor of Justice has repeatedly pointed out that the annual state budget does not comply with the Constitution. The Constitution states that the Riigikogu adopts the budget for the entire revenue and expenditure each year as a law, but not as an explanatory memorandum. Here, too, the difference is substantive: a law is mandatory, while an explanatory memorandum does not oblige anyone to anything.

Perhaps it is high time that the state agencies refrain from doing anything not directly necessary for the service of the people. That laws should be limited to clear, understandable, well-considered provisions, while an explanatory memorandum sets out an honest impact assessment. Wherever possible, benchmarks, reports, development plans should be abandoned. The focus should be on what is essential for people – i.e. the free and smooth functioning of everyday life without state interference. However, if the state intervenes, the task of all officials must be to serve the individual and solve their problem – so that in Estonia it would be easy to raise children and grow old with dignity, do the work one likes, start a business, build a home, or manage the land and forest.

Perhaps indeed those who say that most people do not want freedom and responsibility, but

abundance and even an imaginary sense of security, are right, and the latter presumes deprivation of liberty, distrust, commands and prohibitions. Yes, perhaps the public will praise violation of fundamental rights until it realises that this is a big mistake and does a lot of harm. However, decision-makers must not succumb to such sentiments even for a moment.

The Constitution obliges us all to protect freedom and to bear responsibility. I wish us all the strength and the will to do so!

Ülle Madise

Chancellor of Justice

The Chancellor of Justice as the national human rights institution

As of 1 January 2019, the institution of the Chancellor of Justice is simultaneously the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI). The main task of this independent institution is to monitor, promote and protect human rights in Estonia.

Every national human rights institution may seek official international accreditation status, which gives the institution additional rights within the United Nations human rights protection system and links it more strongly to other human rights institutions and international organisations. In charge of the accreditation process is the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI). Since December 2020, the Chancellor holds A-status, i.e. the highest level of NHRI accreditation. Human rights institutions are accredited every five years.

Budgetary autonomy of the national human rights institution

The principles for the operation of the human rights institution are set out in the so-called Paris Principles adopted by a resolution of the UN General Assembly. The principles lay down, inter alia, that human rights institutions must operate independently of the Government and must have adequate resources to carry out their tasks.

To this end, the Chancellor of Justice, in cooperation with other constitutional institutions, proposed to the Riigikogu to amend the State Budget Act so as to ensure greater budgetary independence of constitutional institutions from the executive in the future. The amendments to the State Budget Act, approved by the Riigikogu, entered into force on 7 June 2024. Under the new Act, the budget applications of constitutional institutions will be

examined by the Riigikogu Finance Committee.

Work of the Advisory Committee on Human Rights

For six years, the Advisory Committee on Human Rights has been operational under the Office of the Chancellor of Justice, its main task being to advise the Chancellor on issues of human rights protection and promotion. Every four years, a committee set up by the Chancellor selects members of the Advisory Committee by public competition. Selection of members proceeds from the principle of equal treatment, diversity, and balance. The work of a member of the Advisory Committee is voluntary.

In autumn 2022, the mandate of the first composition of the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Human Rights ended and the second composition of the Advisory Committee started its work. Members of the Advisory Committee include recognised experts from the fields of equal treatment, the rights of people with disabilities, children's rights, violence prevention, healthcare, gene technology, medical ethics, and many other fields.

During the reporting year, the Advisory Committee on Human Rights convened twice: on 21 November and 7 May. The November meeting discussed the risks of excessive surveillance of people. Observations by the members of the Advisory Committee were also taken into account in the drafting of a memorandum sent to the Minister of Justice. Inspired by the discussion, Talis Bachmann wrote an article published on the "Human Rights" book blog – „Kas minu kodu ikka on minu kindlus? Kommentaare jälgimisühiskonna teemadel" (Is my home really my castle? Comments on issues of a surveillance society).

The Advisory Committee meeting in May addressed the issue of sexual violence and touched upon the so-called consent law, which seeks to change the definition of sexual violence. At the meeting, the Praxis report „Seksuaalvägivalla kohtueelne uurimine" (Pre-trial investigation of sexual violence) was examined, as was the analysis commissioned by the Ministry of Justice, titled „Seksuaalse enesemääramise vastaste süütegude koosseisude vastavusest Euroopa Nõukogu Istanbuli konventsioonile" (On compliance of the statutory definitions of offences against sexual self-determination with the Istanbul Convention of the Council of Europe).

In addition, the Chancellor of Justice sought advice from the members of the Advisory Committee on the rights of persons with disabilities, equal treatment and data protection, patient and environmental law.

International reports

During the reporting year, the Chancellor participated in preparing several international reports and other documents.

- In September, the Chancellor presented her opinion on implementing the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. She noted that the restriction of the right to vote of third-country nationals, which the Government of the Republic is planning, is not compatible with the Constitution. In the Chancellor's opinion, interest groups should be meaningfully involved in societal issues and listened to. The Chancellor also noted that it must be possible to enter data on a person's multiple ethnicities and mother tongues in the population register, if necessary.
- In November, Estonian children and young people presented an overview of the situation of children's rights in Estonia to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Drawing up the children's report was initiated by the Office of the Chancellor of Justice and prepared by the children's rights ambassadors of the Union for Child Welfare, i.e. children themselves. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child monitors compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and makes recommendations to the government on improving the situation of the rights of the child. In addition to the state report, the Chancellor of Justice and NGOs advocating for children's rights also submitted their own reports.
- In February, the Chancellor had an online meeting with representatives of the European Commission to discuss the situation of the rule of law in Estonia. Discussions at the meeting were used as a basis for the European Commission's report on respect for the rule of law in the EU Member States. The Chancellor of Justice was also involved in the drafting of a report on the same subject by the European Network of Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) (see „State of the rule of law in the European Union").
- In April, the Chancellor sent a report to the UN on how the Estonian state has fulfilled its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Based on the state report and third-party reports, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) prepared recommendations for the Estonian government on how to better ensure women's rights.

- In May, the Chancellor participated in preparing a report on implementation of the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, explaining in detail the competence of the Chancellor of Justice in monitoring compliance with the Covenant. The Chancellor also sent her opinion to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for a report on best practices in ombudsman institutions.

As a member of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI), the Chancellor has participated in the work of several working groups which, inter alia, help to prepare ENNHRI positions on artificial intelligence, migration, people with disabilities, older people, and other issues.

Presentations and articles on human rights

The Chancellor of Justice and her advisers attended several conferences and other meetings. Chancellor of Justice Ülle Madise delivered a speech at the Data Protection Association conference, where she stressed the importance of data protection in guaranteeing fundamental rights and freedoms. In November, the Chancellor spoke at the Tallinn Third Youth Popular University (*Tallinna Kolmanda Nooruse Rahvaülikool*) about protecting people's rights and dignity and the democratic and social rule of law. On the Estonian National Defence Course, she delivered a lecture on protecting human rights and security.

Liisi Uder, Adviser to the Chancellor of Justice and Head of Disability Rights, introduced the rights of people with disabilities to heads of units of the company AS Hoolekandeteenused at an autumn seminar. At a seminar organised by the Viru Keemia Grupp, Evelin Lopman, Head of the Business Environment Department, explained what aspects need to be kept in mind when drafting the Climate Act. Odyn Vosman, a Senior Adviser to the Chancellor of Justice, introduced police officers to legal bases for surveillance. Advisers from the Department of Children's and Youth Rights were invited to several meetings where issues related to children's rights were discussed. At several meetings, advisers from the Inspection Visits Department presented the Chancellor of Justice's work as the national preventive mechanism for ill-treatment.

The Chancellor and her advisers are often invited to schools and universities to talk about the Chancellor of Justice's work in protecting human rights, or delegations of pupils and students visit the Chancellor's Office. During the reporting year, a total of sixteen such meetings took place.

The Chancellor of Justice and her advisers also actively appeared in the media.

- On 10 December, on the Kuku radio programme "Välismääraja" the Chancellor discussed problems of ensuring human rights with the host Neem Raud.
- On 15 December, the Chancellor of Justice spoke on the news programme "Aktuaalne kaamera" about the need to protect sensitive data.
- In the March issue of the magazine *Perearst*, Kristi Paron, Senior Adviser to the Chancellor of Justice, and Marje Oona, associate professor of family medicine, explained why, when and how to assess a child patient's decision-making capacity.
- On 4 April, on the Vikerraadio programme "Reporteritund", the Chancellor explained why people with a long-term residence permit also have the right to vote in municipal council elections in Estonia. The Chancellor also addressed third-country nationals' right to vote on 5 April on the Kuku radio programme „Käsi pulsil" and in an opinion article titled "Põhiseadusega ei mängita" (No playing with the Constitution) on the ERR news portal on 20 April.
- On 11 April, Olari Koppel, Deputy Chancellor of Justice-Adviser and former head of the Estonian Cooperation Assembly, spoke about the health of civil society on the Vikerraadio programme "Uudis+".
- On 19 April, via the ERR news portal, the Chancellor explained the conditions for guaranteeing freedom and secrecy of elections.
- At the beginning of May, the Chancellor spoke on Vikerraadio and Raadio 2 about the use of cameras in public space. The dangers of a surveillance society were also discussed in the Vikerraadio programme "Vikerhommik" on 7 June.

A more detailed overview of the appearances of the Chancellor of Justice and her advisers in the media can be found in the sub-chapter "The Year in the Media".

International cooperation

The Chancellor of Justice works closely with her counterparts in other countries and also actively participates in the work of international organisations and networks uniting chancellors of justice, ombudsmen and human rights institutions around the world.

Since 2001, the Chancellor has been a member of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI). The Institute includes over 200 national and regional ombudsmen from over a hundred countries worldwide. In May 2023, Chancellor of Justice Ülle Madise was elected for the

second time to the Board of the International Ombudsman Institute European region. The mandate of the Estonian Chancellor of Justice as a member of the Board ended in May 2024, when a new Board took office. The Board of the European region comprises seven members and currently includes ombudsmen from the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Slovenia, Malta, Ukraine and Cyprus.

The Chancellor of Justice is also a member of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI), the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) and the networks of the European Ombudsmen (ENO), the International Conference of Ombuds Institutions for the Armed Forces (ICOAF), the police ombudsmen (IPCAN) and National Preventive Mechanisms (NPM).

Cooperation and meetings

During the reporting year, the Chancellor of Justice hosted a number of ombudsmen and other civil servants from European countries, as well as representatives of international organisations.

In October, the Finnish Parliamentary Ombudsman, together with his advisers, visited the Chancellor of Justice as part of long-term good cooperation. At the beginning of June, the Chancellor of Justice organised a spring seminar for members of the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children. At a two-day seminar held at the Office of the Chancellor of Justice, the situation of children growing up in substitute homes and the rights of children whose parents are in prison were discussed. In July, the Chancellor presented her work as the national preventive mechanism to the advisers of the Ukrainian Ombudsman.

There is still a lot of interest in data protection and Estonia as a digital state. In February, the Chancellor was visited by a delegation from the Eastern Partnership countries, which included representatives of the data protection authorities from Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. In March, the Chancellor met with the heads of the legal departments of the Dutch ministries. In May, the seven-member delegation of the German Bundestag Committee for the Scrutiny of Elections, Immunity and the Rules of Procedure visiting the Chancellor of Justice also took an interest in e-elections and Estonia’s progress in the field of digitalisation.

The Chancellor met three times with representatives from the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

(OSCE). In October, OSCE officials were interested in how the freedom of action of state institutions and civil society organisations ensuring human rights is guaranteed in Estonia. In February, the Chancellor was provided an overview of the report on the 2023 Riigikogu elections and the recommendations made therein to the Estonian authorities. At the beginning of June, an online meeting with an OSCE representative took place to discuss the right to hold peaceful public assemblies.

Cooperation also continued with representatives of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex). This agency regularly monitors the guarantee of fundamental rights at the Estonian border, which is also an external border of the European Union. In October, a meeting took place with members of the European Economic and Social Committee ad hoc study group on fundamental rights and the rule of law. The rule of law situation in Estonia was also discussed at an online meeting with European Commission officials in February. In April, advisers to the Chancellor of Justice met online with the rapporteur on Estonia from the UN Subcommittee against Torture.

The Chancellor of Justice was also visited by Evelyn Veenker, President of the Stuttgart Social Court, a delegation of Ukrainian judges, students from South Korea and ambassadors from Germany, France and Morocco.

During the reporting year, the Chancellor and her advisers also participated in several events organised by colleagues in other countries and by international organisations. For example, ombudsmen and chancellors of justice from the Baltic and Nordic countries met twice. In Copenhagen in September, they discussed how to organise the work of their institutions in a situation where the number of complaints to an ombudsman or chancellor of justice has increased significantly. They also discussed the experience of applying European Union law and how to carry out own-initiative procedures effectively. In June, they met again in Helsinki where cooperation with the media and the parliament, as well as the issues of migration and freedom of expression were discussed. It has become a tradition for Baltic and Nordic ombudsmen to meet once a year. The next meeting will be hosted by the Latvian Ombudsman in Riga in June 2025.

Several other international cooperation events among ombudsmen and human rights institutions took place during the reporting year. In November, the Chancellor attended a conference of the network of ombudsmen of the EU Member States (ENO) organised by the European Ombudsman in Brussels, where she took part in a debate on artificial intelligence. At the European Union Translators and Interpreters Conference in Luxembourg, the

Chancellor gave a presentation on the importance of clear language in translation. The Chancellor of Justice then attended the global IOI annual meeting and conference in The Hague, as well as a seminar in Manchester, where the creation of a joint training academy was discussed with colleagues from the IOI European region.

The Chancellor's advisers represented the Chancellor in working groups set up by the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions and in several meetings organised by ombudsmen for children and other networks. For example, advisers from the Children's and Youth Rights Department attended the ENOC annual meeting and conference in Brussels in September, and the meeting of Baltic and Polish ombudsmen for children in Riga organised by Latvian colleagues in November. The Deputy Chancellor of Justice-Adviser represented the Chancellor of Justice at the annual meetings of the GANHR and ENNHR in Geneva and, at the invitation of the Czech Ombudsman, participated as an expert at a working meeting in Brno to discuss creation of the Czech human rights institution. In addition, the Deputy Chancellor of Justice-Adviser took part in the work of the working group that drew up the European Code of Conduct for Ombudsmen. The Head of the Inspection Visits Department took part in a seminar of national preventive mechanisms in Copenhagen organised in cooperation between the OSCE and the Danish Ombudsman.

The existence of considerable international interest in the activities of the Estonian Chancellor of Justice is also demonstrated by dozens of requests for information sent to the Chancellor. For example, the Chancellor of Justice has been asked how she uses the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in her work, what complaints have needed to be resolved in the areas of equal treatment and the rights of the child, how the Chancellor organises visits to places of detention, how she supervises the activities of the police, and what has been done in the field of artificial intelligence and the rights of persons with disabilities.

International reports

The Chancellor participated in drawing up several international reports. For example, she presented her views to the European Commission, which drew up a report on the rule of law situation in the Member States of the European Union. In addition, the Chancellorcontributed to preparation of the rule of law report by the European Network of NationalHuman Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) ("State of the rule of law in the European Union"), thepurpose of which was to provide additional information for the above-mentioned reportdrawn up by the European Commission.

The Chancellor also presented her opinion on implementing the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. She noted that the restriction of the right to vote of third-country nationals, which the Government of the Republic is planning, is not compatible with the Constitution. In the Chancellor's opinion, interest groups should be meaningfully involved in issues of society and listened to. The Chancellor also noted that it must be possible to enter data on a person's multiple ethnicities and mother tongues in the population register, if necessary.

In spring, the Chancellor sent a report to the UN on how the Estonian state has fulfilled its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Based on the state report and third-party reports, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) prepared recommendations for the Estonian government on how better to ensure women's rights.

The Chancellor also sent her comments for the report on implementation of the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, explaining in detail how the Chancellor of Justice monitors compliance with the Covenant. In a report being prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the Chancellor explained best practices of ombudsman institutions.

In November, Estonian children and young people presented an overview of the situation of children's rights in Estonia to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Drawing up the children's report was initiated by the Office of the Chancellor of Justice and was prepared by the children's rights ambassadors of the Union for Child Welfare, i.e. children themselves. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child monitors compliance with the UN Convention onthe Rights of the Child and makes recommendations to the government on improving the situation of the rights of the child. In addition to the state report, the Chancellor of Justice and NGOs advocating for children's rights also submitted their reports.

The year in the media

Speeches and presentations

Presentation by Chancellor of Justice Ülle Madise „Kas vaimsus, kõlbelisus, õiglus ja õigus võivad poliittehnoloogia moevooludes pinnale jääda?" (Can spirituality, morality, justice and law stay afloat in the currents of trends in political technology) at a conference dedicated to Jaan Tõnisson on 22 December 2024

Presentation by the Chancellor of Justice "Obstruktsionismist, usaldusest ja targast valitsemisest" (Obstructionism, credibility and smart governance) at the Estonian Academic Law Society on 7 December 2023

Speech by the Chancellor of Justice at the Tallinn Third Youth Popular University on 16 November 2023.

Meeting of the Chancellor of Justice with Estonian interpreters and translators of the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Court of Justice of the EU and the Court of Auditors on 7 November 2023

Speech by the Chancellor of Justice at the educational conference "Igaüks meist loeb" on 6 October 2023

Welcome speech by the Chancellor of Justice "Andmekaitse olulisus põhiõiguste tagamisel" (The importance of data protection in guaranteeing fundamental rights) at the Data Protection Association conference on 5 October 2023

Presentation by Evelin Lopman, Head of the Business Environment Department, " Millist kliimaseadust vajame?" (What kind of a Climate Act do we need) at the VKG

environment day on 12 September 2023

Interviews

The Chancellor's adviser Indrek-Ivar Määrits spoke on Vikerraadio about the situation in detention cells on 8 August 2024

The Chancellor's adviser Evelin Lopman spoke about environmental restrictions on the Kuku radio morning programme on 11 July 2024

The Chancellor of Justice spoke on Vikerraadio about the surveillance society on 7 June 2024

The Chancellor of Justice on the Kuku radio programme "Sihik" on 6 June 2024

Interview with the Chancellor of Justice in Postimees daily "Iga laps on vahva, uudishimulik ja milleski eriti osav" (Every child is fun, curious and particularly skilled in something) on 1 June 2024

The Chancellor of Justice on the programme "Lastega ja lastele" ("With and For Children") on 1 June 2024

The Chancellor of Justice spoke on Raadio 2 about cameras in public space on 7 May 2024

The Chancellor of Justice spoke on Vikerraadio about cameras in public space on 6 May 2024

The Chancellor of Justice on the programme "Esimene stuudio" on 25 April 2024

The Chancellor of Justice on the ERR news portal about freedom and secrecy of elections on 19 April 2024

Deputy Chancellor of Justice-Adviser Olari Koppel on the ERR news portal about the secrecy of elections on 18 April 2024

Deputy Chancellor of Justice-Adviser Olari Koppel spoke on Vikerraadio about the possibility of a collective appeal on 11 April 2024

The Chancellor of Justice on the programme "Käsi pulsil" on 5 April 2024

The Chancellor of Justice on the programme "Kultuuristuudio. Arutelu" on 4 April 2024

The Chancellor of Justice on the radio programme "Reporteritund" on 4 April 2024

The Chancellor of Justice on the programme “Otse Postimehest” on 1 April 2024

Weekly interview. “Ülle Madise: praegu nõutakse joonelt vaidlusse sekkumist ja poole valimist” (Nowadays people demand that you immediately intervene in a dispute and pick a side) in the magazine *Edasi* on 29 March 2024

The Chancellor of Justice spoke on Kuku radio about the independence of the prosecutor’s office on 21 March 2024

The Chancellor of Justice on the “Aktuaalne kaamera” television news programme on 17 March 2024

The Chancellor of Justice on the Kanal 2 programme “Telehommik“ on 14 March 2024

The Chancellor of Justice spoke on the “Vikerhommik“ programme about good and bad language use on 14 March 2024

The Chancellor of Justice on the programme “Uudis+“ about standard written language on 12 March 2024

The Chancellor of Justice on Delfi TV on 22 February 2024

Chancellor of Justice Adviser Liisi Uder on the Vikerraadio programme “Keelesaade” on 11 February 2024

Chancellor of Justice Adviser Indrek-Ivar Määrits on the programme “Zerkalo” on 30 January 2024

The Chancellor of Justice on the programme “Keelesaade” on 14 January 2024

The Chancellor of Justice on the Vikerraadio programme “Reedene intervjuu” (Friday interview) on 12 January 2024

The Chancellor of Justice on the Kuku radio programme “Neeme Raud. Siin” on 23 December 2023

The Chancellor of Justice on the Kuku radio programme “Kahe vahel” on 22 December 2023

The Chancellor of Justice on the “Aktuaalne kaamera“: Tuleb selgeks teha, kes delikaatseid andmeid hoida tohib (It must be made clear who may keep sensitive data) on 15 December

2023

The Chancellor of Justice on the Vikerraadio programme “Uudis+” on 12 December 2023

The Chancellor of Justice spoke about votes of confidence on Kuku radio on 11 December 2023

The Chancellor of Justice on the Kuku radio programme “Välismääraja“ about guaranteeing human rights on 10 December 2023

Chancellor’s Adviser Aigi Kivioja on the judicial podcast Kohtulood on 8 December 2023

The Chancellor of Justice on the occasion of international Plain Language Day on Vikerraadio on 13 October 2023

The Chancellor of Justice on the programme “Esimene stuudio“ on 28 September 2023

The Chancellor of Justice presented her annual report on Kuku radio on 22 September 2023

Chancellor’s Adviser Liisi Uder spoke on the programme “Reporteritund“ about the concerns of people with disabilities on 20 September 2023

Interview with the Chancellor of Justice in the newspaper *Sirp* on 1 September 2023

Articles

Article by Kristi Paron, Adviser to the Chancellor of Justice, “Lapsest täiskasvanuks“ (From a child to an adult) in the magazine *Eesti Õde*, summer issue 2024

“Ülle Madise: põhiseadusega ei mängita” (No playing with the Constitution) on the ERR news portal, 20 April 2024

“Ülle Madise: rämeduse esteetika kaasaja poliitika moevoolus” (The aesthetics of raucousness in the fashion trends of modern politics), magazine *Edasi*, 15 April 2024

Article by Kristi Paron and Marje Oona about a child patient’s decision-making capacity, in the magazine *Perearst*, March 2024

Article by the Chancellor’s Advisers Karolin Soo, Kristi Lahesoo and Ivika Nõukas “Kuhu jäävad põhiõigused? Vastamata küsimused kättetoimetamise fiktsiooni laiendamisel” (Where are Fundamental Rights? Unanswered Questions on Extending the Fiction of Service) in the

journal *Juridica*, No 2, 2024

Article by Ülle Madise, Liina Lust-Vedder and Ida Ulita Vooglaid "Töötõke Riigikogus ja eelnõude usaldusküsimusega sidumine" (The Working Barrier in the Riigikogu and Linking Drafts to the Issue of Confidence) in the journal *Juridica*, No 2, 2024

Ülle Madise on the *Sirp* newspaper discussion panel: "Miks üldse ja kellele ÕS?" (The dictionary of standard Estonian ÕS - why and for whom?), 15 March 2024

"Ülle Madise: eesti kirjakeele normi ei tohi kaotada" (The standard written Estonian norm must not be abolished), *Postimees*, 15 March 2024

"Õiguskantsler Ülle Madise vastuseks Marustele: kui mittekodanikke hakatakse hääleõiguseta jätma, viin küsimuse riigikohtusse" (Chancellor of Justice Ülle Madise's response to Maruste: if non-citizens are going to be left without the right to vote, I will take the matter to the Supreme Court), *Eesti Päevaleht*, 13 March 2024