

# In general

- ✓ Estonia is working towards a **strong, prosperous, and secure Europe**. At a time when the current rules-based global order is under a deepening threat and past reference points are changing, the European Union must prioritise the **defence of its interests, the security and well-being of its citizens, and the rule of law**, if it is to preserve its values.
- ✓ **Europe's defence readiness** must be increased significantly and immediately to prepare for and handle even the most serious scenarios. Europe must take more responsibility for its security and focus on defence as a common public good. NATO will remain the cornerstone of European and transatlantic security, but the EU must use its strengths to support NATO's activities more.
- ✓ The EU needs to factor in **security crisis preparedness needs and threat assessments** throughout all its actions.
- ✓ A strong, confident, and efficient European Union depends on the **unity of its member states in foreign and security policy** and on the EU's ability to **establish itself as a confident geopolitical actor**.
- ✓ **Russia is the most immediate and long-term threat to the European Union, and the EU must take this into account in its policymaking**. The European Union must continue to give full support to Ukraine to ensure a strong, independent, and prosperous Ukraine as a future EU Member State. It is essential for Estonia that changing borders by force is never recognised; that countries retain the right to choose their alliances; and that the politics of spheres of influence does not gain a foothold. The aggressor must be held responsible and compensate for the damage it has caused.
- ✓ Estonia's goal is to have a **strong and functioning internal market** for businesses to operate smoothly in an economic area of over 450 million consumers. The strong single market of the European Union is based on **fair competition and equal opportunities** for both Member States and businesses.
- ✓ EU business rules need a reality check. To improve the competitiveness of the European Union, its legislative environment needs to be **simplified**. This requires reducing the volume of EU legislation, focusing on better implementation of existing law, and reducing regulatory fragmentation, duplication, and reporting obligations.
- ✓ The necessity and pertinence of any new legislative act must be based on conclusive evidence, confirmed by an impact analysis. EU lawmaking must take realistic account of the **costs for businesses and the public sector**, required to bring their activities into line with the requirements of EU law. It is essential to maintain strict control over costs.
- ✓ **Transparency is needed in regulating subjects with significant socio-economic impact**. In addition

- ✓ to a draft legislative act, the European Commission must also submit draft delegated acts to understand the overall impact of any initiative.
- ✓ Drafts of new EU legislative acts must follow the '**once-only**' principle of requesting data, ensuring that data can be reused and cross-used in Member States.
- ✓ Estonia will appropriately transpose European Union law based on the agreed **minimum**.
- ✓ In the face of a significantly changed external environment, the EU needs to urgently increase its **economic independence**, strengthen and diversify reliable **global partnerships**, and **enhance its trade policy**.
- ✓ **To move towards climate neutrality, the EU must create growth opportunities for businesses and make the clean economy a competitive advantage for Europe.** Affordable energy prices and security of supply can be achieved when the EU budget continues to support the establishment of cross-border interconnections and encourages the introduction of renewable energy. When setting **new** environmental and climate targets, the EU must consider each country's specific geographical characteristics as well as past efforts.
- ✓ **A level playing field and gender equality** must be promoted in all EU policy areas without compromising the principles and concepts of gender equality. Legal protection against discrimination on the grounds of nationality, race, colour, religion, beliefs, age, disability, or sexual orientation must be harmonised across sectors.
- ✓ In the negotiations on the next **long-term EU budget**, Estonia will stand up for the budgetary ambition of meeting the crises and challenges of recent years. Therefore, the budget period starting in 2028 must contribute more to the common good throughout the Union, such as defence capabilities, strengthening external borders, and building cross-border connections. Cohesion policy must also provide adequate support for the continued socio-economic catching-up of more prosperous regions, and in terms of competitiveness, particular attention must be paid to the difficult situation of the countries on the eastern border. Direct agricultural payments must be harmonised between countries. The next EU budget must also ensure continued support for Ukraine and readiness for EU enlargement.