

Estonia Today

THE GOVERNMENT

The current **Estonian Government** is a minority government and the coalition consists of two political parties: **Reform Party (R)** and **Pro Patria and Res Publica Union (PPRP)**.

Originally the Government was formed after the 4 March 2007 regular parliamentary elections. President Toomas Hendrik Ilves called **Mr Andrus Ansip**, chairman of the Reform Party that won the elections, to be the next Prime Minister. Mr Ansip received the necessary majority of 62 votes from Estonia's 101-member parliament (*Riigikogu*) to form a new Government. The Government coalition consisted of three political parties: **Reform Party**, **Pro Patria and Res Publica Union** and **Social Democratic Party**. Mr Ansip has run a minority government since **21 May 2009**, when he kicked out a junior coalition partner, the Social Democrats, from the two-year-old Cabinet as a result of disagreements over budget cuts.

The Reform Party (R) has 7 and the Pro Patria and Res Publica Union (PPRP) 6 ministers in the Government.

Prime Minister	Mr Andrus Ansip	R
Minister of Defence	Mr Jaak Aaviksoo	PPRP
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Mr Urmas Paet	R
Minister of Internal Affairs	Mr Marko Pomerants	PPRP
Minister of Economic Affairs and Communications	Mr Juhan Parts	PPRP
Minister of Finance	Mr Jürgen Ligi	R
Minister of Social Affairs	Mr Hanno Pevkur	R
Minister of Justice	Mr Rein Lang	R
Minister of Education and Research	Mr Tõnis Lukas	PPRP
Minister of the Environment	Mr Jaanus Tamkivi	R
Minister of Culture	Ms Laine Jänes	R
Minister of Agriculture	Mr Helir-Valdor Seeder	PPRP
Minister of Public Administration	Mr Siim-Valmar Kiisler	PPRP

Explanation:

The executive power of the state – the Government – is responsible to the Riigikogu (Parliament). Appointment to the office of the Prime Minister and withdrawal of the Government lies within the competence of the parliament. The Government also enjoys a stabilising guarantee – the right to dismiss the Riigikogu with the consent of the President and call new elections if the Riigikogu expresses no confidence in the Government.

The Government (cabinet) consists of the Prime Minister and Ministers.

The Constitution defines the areas of responsibility of the Government as the following:

- Implementation of domestic and foreign policies;
- direction and co-ordination of the work of government institutions;
- organisation and implementation of legislation, the resolutions of the Riigikogu, and edicts of the President;
- submitting of bills and international treaties to the Riigikogu;
- preparation of drafts of the state budget;
- implementation of, and reporting on, the budget;
- management of relations with foreign states.

How the Government is appointed:

The President nominates the Prime Minister who then forms a Government. If the President's candidate(s) fail(s) to form a Government (the Constitution permits the President two nominations), the *Riigikogu* will name a Prime Minister to form a government.

The Prime Minister alone nominates the ministers who are formally appointed by the President and swear an oath before the *Riigikogu*.

Government members do not need to be members of the *Riigikogu* or have any political party affiliation. However, the selection of the Prime Minister, the formation of a working Government and the success of a legislative programme depend on co-operation with Parliament.

A Government can resign due to any of three reasons: the death or resignation of the Prime Minister, a vote of no-confidence by the *Riigikogu* in the Government, or the election of a new parliament.

The national elections, since the re-establishment of independence, were held on 20 September 1992, on 5 March 1995, on 7 March 1999, on 2 March 2003, on 4 March 2007. The next regular elections will take place on 6 March 2011.