



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

On the sixth of December, each and every Finn can feel proud and privileged to celebrate our independence. Recent news from around the world has proven that peace, freedom and economic stability are not self-evident for everyone.

The conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as the shocking terrorist attacks, have affected us all. Violence and unrest have taken centre-stage in a dramatic way. This unrest and distress has triggered a flow of immigrants across Europe – we are still seeking sustainable solutions to this situation. However, it is clear that the fundamental solutions to curbing migration depend on achieving lasting stability in the conflict zones. Trust and a common approach by several countries will be needed in order to build peace. Recent incidents have shown that increasing cooperation is needed throughout the international community. We also increasingly need each other.

We Finns have settled in all parts of the world. Mobility around the world has been commonplace for many of us at some point in our lives. Many Finns grow up in an international environment as a natural part of their lives and become used to the countless different outlooks they encounter around the world.

However, the Finnish identity knows no boundaries. It is an inherent part of us and our ties to Finland remain strong. You, expatriate Finns, are important ambassadors for Finland, spreading knowledge of the unique features of our identity and culture. Solidarity and integrity have been among Finland's strengths for our almost 100 years of independence. There is a continuous need for determined efforts towards solidarity – both within and beyond our national borders.

I wish you all a wonderful 98th Finnish Independence Day and restful days ahead as Christmas approaches.

Sauli Niinistö
President of the Republic