Swedish King Gustaf V on a visit to Estonia (June 1929). Planting of oaks in Kadriorg Palace park. The king is pictured in the central part of the photo wearing an admiral’s uniform. Photo by National Archive.


Swedish King Gustaf V on a visit to Estonia (June 1929). Planting of oaks in Kadriorg Palace park. The king is pictured in the central part of the photo wearing an admiral’s uniform. Photo by National Archive

Swedish Crown Princess Victoria and President of the Republic of Estonia Kersti Kaljulaid with their spouses by the oak planted by King Gustaf V (August 2018). Photo by Annika Haas — Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
SELECTED CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN ESTONIA-SWEDEN RELATIONS

**September 1917**
Jaan Tõnisson proposes the idea of a Baltic-Nordic Federation as the aim of independent Estonian foreign policy to the Estonian Provincial Assembly

**26 January 1918**
Jaan Tõnisson arrives in Stockholm as a member of the first Estonian Foreign Delegation

**May 1918**
Ferdinand Kull arrives in Stockholm as a member of the first Estonian Foreign Delegation

**June-July 1918**
The Estonian Information Bureau is founded in Stockholm, headed by the poet Gustav Suits (active until December 1918)

**November-December 1919**
The Estonian special delegation (Ferdinand Kull, Eduard Laaman, Joseph Goldarbeiter) is in Stockholm to negotiate with the Swedish government over Estonian defence

**December 1918-January 1919**
The Estonian military delegation (Otto Strandman, Viktor Mutt, Hans Pöhl) is in Stockholm to organise the recruitment of Swedish volunteers for the Estonian War of Independence

**January 1919**
The Estonian Provisional Government appoints Arnold Posti as the Estonian Consul in Stockholm

**January 1919**
Carl Axel Mothander signs a contract with the Estonian Temporary Government, promising to recruit a contingent of 300 Swedish troops to fight on the Estonian side

**April 1919**
The temporary diplomatic representative of the Estonian government, Eduard Virgo, arrives in Stockholm

**June 1919**
Otto A. Wallén is appointed as the Estonian Consul in Stockholm. He remains on his post until April 1920

**June 1919**
Regular sea traffic established between Tallinn and Stockholm (S/S Kalevipoeg)

**July 1919**
The Swedish government decides to re-establish a consulate in Tallinn and appoints Olof Andreas Hedman as Vice Consul, replacing the previous Vice Consul Erik Gahlnbäck

**9 September 1919**
Sweden recognises the Republic of Estonia de facto

**March 1920**
The Estonian government appoints Karl Menning as the Estonian diplomatic representative to the Scandinavian countries, effective until March 1921 (based in Stockholm)

**5 February 1921**
Sweden recognises the Republic of Estonia de jure

**April 1921**
Eduard Virgo is appointed as the Estonian Consul and Chargé d’Affaires to the Scandinavian countries, based in Stockholm (he served in the position with a hiatus until 1928)

**5 June 1921**
The consecration of the first Bishop of Estonia, Jakob Kukk, by the Archbishop of Sweden, Nathan Söderblom

**July 1921**
Direct flights between Stockholm and Estonia begin

**August 1921**
Carl Einar Thure af Wirsén Sweden’s Chargé d’Affaires in Estonia, presents his credentials to the head of state, the State Elder

**September 1921**
Swedish King Gustaf V appoints Ulf Torsten Undén as the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Estonia and Latvia (based in Riga)
July 1923
The Estonian-Swedish trade agreement comes into force

January 1925
The Swedish-Estonian Society is founded by 29 prominent people from the Swedish government and society. Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf becomes its first honorary member

May 1928
Friedrich Karl Akel becomes the first Estonian Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Sweden, Norway and Denmark (based in Stockholm)

June 1928
A memorial to Swedish King Gustav II Adolf, who founded the University of Tartu in 1632, is opened in Tartu to mark the 10th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia. It is a gift from the Swedish-Estonian Society

August 1928
The new Swedish Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Baltic states, Patrik Carl Reinhold Reuterswärd, presents his credentials to the Estonian State Elder

September 1928
Estonian State Elder Jaan Tõnisson makes an official visit to Stockholm

June 1929
Visit of Swedish King Gustaf V to Estonia

June / July 1932
Swedish Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf visits Estonia in connection with the 300th anniversary of the University of Tartu. After visiting Tallinn and Tartu, the Crown Prince also visits Narva, Haapsalu and coastal areas where the Swedish minority mostly lives

May 1935
Estonian Foreign Minister Julius Seljamaa visits Stockholm

June and July 1935
The official visit of the Swedish Royal Navy to Estonia (visiting Tallinn, Haapsalu, Pärnu, Ruhnu)

July 1935
Karl Robert Pusta is appointed as the new Estonian Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Sweden (until December 1935)

August 1935
The new Swedish Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Baltic states, Per Birger Johansson, presents his credentials in Tallinn. He serves until July 1939 and is succeeded by Chargé d’Affaires Svante Hellstedt

June 1936
Swedish King Gustaf V’s nephew, Count Folke Bernadotte, visits Tallinn and Haapsalu

August 1936
The Estonian Government appoints Heinrich Laretei as the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Sweden, Norway and Denmark, residing in Stockholm

October 1936
The heir to the Swedish throne, Duke of Västerbotten, Prince Gustaf Adolf, visits Estonia to open the Swedish Lion memorial on Härmamägi Hill in Narva for an event on 18 October to mark the victory of King Karl XII over the forces of Peter I of Russia in 1700

June 1937
Swedish Foreign Minister Rickard Sandler visits Estonia

September 1939
The Bank of Estonia decides to peg Estonian currency to the currency of Sweden as a neutral country in the war at a rate of 1 Estonian kroon to 1 Swedish krona

August 1940
Diplomatic representations located in Tallinn receive an order from the Soviet occupation forces to close their missions within two weeks. On 15 August 1940, the Estonian Envoy in Stockholm Heinrich Laretei announced the termination of the legation’s activity, while refusing to recognise the occupation and annexation and incorporation of Estonia into the Soviet Union

Autumn 1944
Ca 33 000 Estonians and 7920 Estonian Swedes flee Estonia to Sweden
THE MEETING POINT IN LÄRKSTADEN

ESTONIAN EMBASSY IN STOCKHOLM
Ever since the establishment of the Republic of Estonia, Stockholm has had a special and symbolic role for Estonia, more so than many other European capitals. On 7 September 1917, the Provincial Assembly made a historical decision to form a foreign delegation to advocate for Estonia’s interests. Its mission: to introduce Estonia’s bid for independence in European countries. The foreign delegation was comprised of nine men, all firm in their conviction that the establishment of the Republic of Estonia would not be possible without the support of a greater European community. To this end, the delegation leader Jaan Tõnisson travelled to Stockholm before the end of the year. The Estonian information bureau founded in the Swedish capital in 1918 later evolved into Estonia’s diplomatic representation there. Several hundred Swedes who fought in the Estonian War of Independence also did their part to win Estonia’s freedom. Although official relations were cut in 1940, the Baltic Sea, a common intellectual and cultural space, and people continued to link the countries. When Estonia restored its sovereignty in 1991, Sweden’s government, business people, the Estonian diaspora and friends of Estonia living in Sweden were not passive onlookers in early efforts to rebuild institutions. The spirit of cooperation from that period can still be felt in our relations today. Just as when the republic was originally established in 1918, the restoration of independence again saw an information bureau established in Stockholm in 1990. A diplomatic representation
was established on this foundation. Seven years later, something never before attained came to fruition — Estonia gained an embassy building, a permanent home, at Tyrgatan 3/3a in Stockholm. Over the last 20 years, the building has hosted countless meetings and is itself one of the most effective instruments in our diplomats’ toolbox. In this building, Estonia-Sweden relations have been moulded and developed on a daily basis, and today these relations are gratifyingly substantial in a number of fields. We share many of the same values and similar philosophies, are close with one another, and we are located in one of the world’s fastest developing regions.

In a world that is often more complicated than we would like it to be, we need friends and allies. Building these relations and bridges is the everyday work and duty of diplomats. Whether it is defending Estonia’s security interests, ensuring economic competitiveness or assisting our citizens abroad, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and our representations around the world are there. In Stockholm, the embassy building — Estonia’s landmark and meeting point in Sweden — contributes to these important endeavours.

Sven Mikser
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia, 2016-2019
“Estonia and Sweden are part of one of the world’s fastest-developing regions. The precondition for rapid and sustainable development is close integration, and creatively combining the similarities and particularities of the different societies. Estonia and Sweden are politically like-minded, our values and interests largely coincide.”

“Sweden continues to be the biggest investor in Estonia and our companies are not close to exhausting the export potential of the Swedish market.”

Merle Pajula, Estonian Ambassador to Sweden, 2015-2019
“Relations between Estonia and Sweden have grown to attain the ideal conceivable between two neighbouring countries in this day and age. Without exaggeration, we can say that relations with Swedish entrepreneurs have been the driver of Estonia’s post-re-independence economic success.”

“Estonia and Sweden are largely like-minded and that is also the foundation for good relations.”

“Over the last few decades, many Estonians have adopted Sweden as their new home, and many one-time émigrés have returned home to Estonia. Both places are home.”

Alar Streimann, Estonian Ambassador to Sweden, 2007-2011
Jüri Kahn, Estonian Ambassador to Sweden, 2004-2006
Toomas Tiivel, Estonian Ambassador to Sweden, 2000-2004
During World War I, the possibility of establishing new nation states emerged. Estonian politicians realised this and used the opportunity to work towards national autonomy for Estonia by building up a network of contacts in neighbouring countries. An important step was taken as early as 1917, when the Foreign Delegation was established by Jaan Tõnisson. Its members travelled to several countries, and office rooms were opened in capitals such as Copenhagen and Stockholm. The Republic of Estonia was proclaimed on 24 February 1918. Sweden recognised Estonia de facto on 9 September 1919 and de jure on 5 February 1921. Diplomatic contacts were formalised with the establishment of a consulate in January 1919 and relations were strengthened with the opening of the legation in May 1921. During the interwar period the Estonian representation was located in rented flats at several addresses. Diplomatic relations between Estonia and Sweden were severed in August 1940 with the annexation of Estonia by the Soviet Union. The Estonian envoy, Heinrich Laretei, was forced by Swedish and Soviet authorities to close the legation and hand over the keys to the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which on the same day forwarded the keys to the Embassy of the Soviet Union.
From the Western perspective, Estonia disappeared behind the Iron Curtain after being occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940. The Baltic countries did not return to Swedish consciousness until some political changes took place in the mid 1980s. Political developments accelerated at the end of the decade and the possibility of the Baltic States regaining independence began to look realistic. Estonians in exile as well as in the homeland intensified their efforts to tell the world about what was happening on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea. In Sweden, the Swedish-Estonian Friendship Association applied for financial support from SIDA, the Swedish International Development Board, in order to increase awareness about the situation in Estonia. In the autumn of 1990 support was granted, and some rooms were rented along with Latvians to create an information office at Rådmansgatan 18. There was an intense need for information, and all possible channels were used: radio, television, and newspapers. Meetings and lectures were held in many locations all over Sweden. The information office’s activities continued for some time, even after the opening of the Estonian Embassy in Stockholm. Support for the Baltic States among Swedes and Baltic peoples living in exile was demonstrated during the “Monday meetings” held at Norrmalmstorg, a square in central Stockholm. For 79 consecutive Mondays, starting on 19 March 1990, people gathered at the square to listen to the latest news from the Baltic countries. Speeches were
made by Baltic people in exile, Swedish politicians, and representatives from the Baltic Soviet republics. The last meeting was held shortly after the re-recognition of Estonian independence on 20 August 1991. That Monday the square was packed, with approximately 5,000 participants in attendance. Most Monday meetings had attracted about 300 to 400 people. After the events of 20 August, diplomatic relations with the world could be resumed. Just a few days later, on 27 August 1991, Sweden and Estonia restored their diplomatic relations. Sweden was the first country to open its embassy in Tallinn — the representation was opened on 29 August 1991 with Lars Arne Grundberg as ambassador.
The first Estonian ambassador appointed to Sweden was Margus Laidre in October 1991. In the spring of 1992 the Embassy moved to a rented flat at Storgatan 38 in the district of Östermalm. In 1997 an appropriate building for the Embassy was purchased at Tyrgatan 3 by the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Embassy opened its doors on 17 June 1998 after extensive reconstruction. Today the Estonian Embassy in Stockholm is a fine example of an Estonian diplomatic mission in the Baltic Sea region. Our best tool is the Embassy building, which we use for representing the strengths and opportunities of our country. It is an unique place to welcome our best friends and partners.
“The Estonian and Swedish governments and societies have found their own path to pursue. The guarantee of Estonia’s success has been the speed of decision-making and thinking outside the box, which doesn’t resemble Sweden’s consensus-seeking style.”

“Our existing network of contacts between agencies and officials in the two countries is as closely integrated as it has ever been.”

“The Swedes’ powers of empathy, helpfulness, work ethic, and insistence on following protocol in administrative matters all left a deep impression on me. Sweden has also had more good fortune than Estonia.”

Alar Streimann, Estonian Ambassador to Sweden, 2007-2011
Andres Unga, Estonian Ambassador to Sweden, 1996-2000
Alar Streimann, Estonian Ambassador to Sweden, 2007-2011
“I remember the visit of the Swedish Royal Couple to Estonia in late April 1993 – it was the first state visit to newly independent Estonia – and the warm reception from the people lining much of the Tallinn-Haapsalu highway, despite the cold and snowy weather. That relationship has continued into the present day. The Estonian community in Sweden has left an immense imprint on our history through their cultural and political activity.”

“Estonia and Estonians are respected in Sweden. This is a credit to the Estonian community and their achievements in Sweden. Estonians were able to rapidly integrate and attain success in a foreign society, in business, science and culture. Even in Swedish politics.”

Andres Unga, Estonian Ambassador to Sweden, 1996-2000
Toomas Tiivel, Estonian Ambassador to Sweden, 2000-2004
RELATIONS BETWEEN THE LINES

Good, if not downright excellent relations prevail between Estonia and Sweden. Since the restoration of independence and no doubt prior to that period as well, practically all bilateral meetings at the level of heads of state, heads of government, ministers and officials have started by making note of this fact. The prerequisites for superb relations are all in evidence — geographic proximity, historical ties, similarity of world views, close cultural contacts, joint ventures, regular flights and shipping links and a similar membership profile of all associations that pertain in any degree to our common neighbourhood.

However, such a description may be too simplistic, as no relationship can be seen solely black and white. Estonia-Sweden relations are no exception: there is always something between the lines here, an invisible but clearly perceived divide that can even be an unbridgeable gap in certain fields.

Invisible trust
When the Baltics regained independence in the 1990s and returned to the arena of international relations, our northern neighbours regarded these newly sovereign entities with a parent’s care and goodwill. The Baltics were helped back on their feet with material support, and they were accepted, yet never quite adopted. The Soviet legacy had left its imprint on the newly independent Baltics’
formative years — this legacy was unfamiliar to the Swedes and created a sense of apprehension. These reservations did not disappear completely; however, the two sides have come to know and trust each other, even if they do not agree on everything.

For historical reasons, Estonians have seen relations with Finns as simpler and more natural than with Swedes, who once ruled on these shores, whose tongue is from a different linguistic family and whose attitudes can at times be perceived as reflecting aloofness. The Swedes’ predilection for compromise in every situation can often strike Estonians as a pointless waste of time. These psychological obstacles have not however become determining factors in areas where the interests of both sides can be easily and clearly defined.

The large Estonian diaspora in Sweden, mainly consisting of post-war émigrés, had done a tremendous job by the time independence was restored, leaving Sweden with a positive impression of Estonians. That made it easier for Estonians to enter the Swedish job market or find business partners later on. Estonians’ practical mindset, industriousness and openness to innovation have also contributed. Even if rhetorically, Sweden has trouble accepting Estonia as one of the Nordic countries, practice shows otherwise.
Swedes and Estonians pursue many activities together, and it has become so common that it is often not worthy of mention, either in Estonia or Sweden. No one thinks about the fact that a large part of IKEA furniture or prized Swedish outdoor gear brands are manufactured in Estonia. Estonian doctors and researchers are a common phenomenon in Swedish hospitals and universities. The descendants of Estonian coastal Swedes are busy restoring their ancestral farms on the Estonian islands and coasts. Skype, so widespread as a communication tool around the world, was also developed through the joint efforts of Swedes and Estonians, although this fact tends to be forgotten.

**Invisible mistrust**

One area where an invisible mental gap can be felt is security and defence policy, and views on Russia and policies regarding Russia. The same topic is also a thorn in the side of the Nordic countries themselves, as it was the only area where everyone pursued their own path during the Cold War. True, mutual understanding in this field has also significantly grown in recent years. The annexation of Crimea in 2014 and Russia’s continued aggression in Ukraine have significantly changed Swedish defence and security policy and rekindled the public debate on joining NATO, which was completely absent there just five years ago. Russia’s influence operations directly targeted at Sweden have also contributed to the shift.
The ever more prevalent view among experts — that Russia’s target is not just Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania but the West in general — has managed to create cracks in an entrenched mindset.

We have now seen a true change of course. As a result of demilitarisation that had started in the late 1990s and spanned more than 10 years, Swedish defensive capacity had decreased by 90%. After a 20-year hiatus, it was decided to increase defence spending last year. Compulsory military service, scrapped in 2010, has been reinstated. On the island of Gotland, combat machines and camouflage uniforms can once again be seen and Sweden has signed defence cooperation agreements with Finland and the US. They have also joined a number of different defence initiatives and Sweden participates in NATO exercises. They also work systematically to identify and counter information offensives and other influence operations.
Swedish politicians and experts have developed trust in the Baltics’ experiences and risk assessments, which is a very important change. Still, no deep conviction has developed regarding this issue in Swedish society. Such an attitude cannot in fact crystallize quickly, because of different historical experiences. No matter how close we become, to ordinary Swedish eyes, Estonians still seem a little like bothersome Russophobes.

Three as one
Since independence was regained, it has been quite common for the three Baltic States to be viewed as a single homogenous group. They are expected to act jointly and, likewise, policy toward the Baltics should ideally also be uniform. But just as the Nordics are five different countries, each with its own interests, traditions and principles that have developed over time, so too do the Baltic States differ and often have different cooperation priorities and destination countries. Lithuania looks more to Poland and Central Europe, Estonia looks to the Nordics, and Latvia steals glances at both.

Thinking of the Baltics as one entity does not necessarily yield the best result. Instead it is suggestive of an inadequate knowledge of the Baltic States. The countries and various fields have developed differently, since the models followed have been different. Rather,
the best outcome might stem from a specific bilateral project, whether it is a joint procurement or some regional initiative.

Analysing the current international situation, we see that bilateral relations are increasing. Multilateral formats and institutions are not trusted anymore, as they are not responsive enough to rapidly occurring changes. Similarly to many other European Union member states, Estonia and Sweden are no strangers to polarised society and stark oppositions on security and economic issues and the question of openness or isolationism. While bilateral relations are important in areas that offer tailor-made solutions to specific issues, regional coalitions should not be underestimated in strategic affairs. This, too, is a question of trust that we can recognise and catch by reading between the lines.

If we want the institutions from which we draw our well-being and security — the EU, NATO and the UN — to remain vital, now is the time to form Nordic-Baltic coalitions on different topics. By taking greater responsibility for the region, we also increase trust. One hundred years should be a sufficiently long trial run in relations between neighbours to realise who one is dealing with.

Riina Kaljurand
Policy Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia
“On one hand, Swedes all knew some Estonian from their family circles, school or workplace, but years ago it was certainly problematic what was said and written at schools about the countries on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea (read: what was not said). This has started to change.”

“I remember well from my time spent living in Sweden that it wasn’t possible to find a Swede who hadn’t worked or studied with some diligent Estonian he or she remembered fondly. Already that speaks for itself!”

Toomas Tiivel, Estonian Ambassador to Sweden, 2000-2004
Alar Streimann, Estonian Ambassador to Sweden, 2007-2011
“Following the restoration of independence, Estonia has consistently contributed to closer cooperation between democracies in the region and we also help emerging democracies by developing digital services. More and more people are travelling, studying, living and working abroad, and they need easy and reliable access to their healthcare, real estate or tax data. Estonia can offer the X-road data layer, and other countries have their own solutions. Setting common goals helps us reach better results by combining different elements.”

Merle Pajula, Estonian Ambassador to Sweden, 2015-2019
HISTORY OF THE HOUSE IN A NUTSHELL

The Estonian Embassy is situated in the north-western corner of the district of Östermalm in a quarter named Tofslärkan — Crested lark. The area is called Lärkstaden, Larktown, as its four quarters are all named after species of lark. Several embassies and residences are located in these quarters. Lärkstaden was planned in 1908 and the city plan stated that single-family town villas were to be built there. Due to the strict building regulations applied to the area, the main challenge for the architects was to design houses as spacious as possible. There were also special regulations concerning the design of the balconies, bay windows, and towers. Neither shops nor offices were allowed in the houses and only one kitchen was permitted in each villa, as they were intended for one family only. Occasionally a small kitchen for the housekeeper or driver was allowed. The city plan also regulated the relationship between the street width and the height of the buildings. In Lärkstaden the streets were to be 12 metres wide and the houses could not exceed 13.5 metres in height. All the houses represented high-quality handcrafted workmanship with authentic materials such as natural stone and brick. All 51 plots in Lärkstaden were built up in 1914. The building contractor Albert Andersson bought the property at Tofslärkan 14 in order to build
a town house for his family. He hired the architect Nils Lovén, who had the drawings ready in April 1910, and the planning permission was granted in July. Mr Andersson himself served as both developer and builder. In 1912 his family moved in and they lived in the house until 1917. The property had several owners and tenants over the years, but no major changes were undertaken until Mrs Sonja Borgenhard bought the house in 1937. Then an extensive renovation was done under the direction of architect Gunnar Forszén. Only one year later, the property was sold to director Gustaf Winqvist. His family included four almost-adult children, and changes had to be made in the house to adapt it to the family’s needs. In 1955 the engineering company Kjessler & Mannersståhle rented the souterrain floor as their drawing office. The rent tribunal approved the change from a private home to an office area because several of the nearby buildings had already been converted into offices. Kjessler & Mannersståhle was interested in buying the whole building, but the owner refused to sell. Only after the death of Gustaf Winqvist in 1972 was the property sold to Walter Lindqvist, who immediately rented the building to the Albanian Embassy. Due to mismanagement, the Embassy was closed when Sten Rundin, President and CEO of Fastighets AB Nexor, bought the house in 1989.
A major rebuilding plan was launched. Permission was granted for a residential space combined with a smaller office. Unfortunately the renovation, which included the installation of a new elevator, re-plastering the façade, and the addition of a new copper roof, exceeded the owner’s financial resources and the company went bankrupt in 1996. The house was sold and the new owner planned three co-operative flats. This project also failed and the premises were once again put on the market.

The Estonian Embassy had been looking for a suitable house in this area and the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to purchase the building because of the location, size, and potential for rebuilding the interior according to the Embassy’s needs. The contract of purchase was signed on 8 January 1997. As the building was almost an empty shell, the architect was free to get creative, at least in the public spaces. The renovation work started in 1997 and was completed by March 1998 and the Embassy moved into its own house on Tyrgatan.
ARNOLD POSTI
(1892-1941)

Consul in Stockholm 1919
Posti represented the Estonian company Volta in Sweden from 1914. He became the first consul to Sweden. Posti was arrested in 1941 and died in a Siberian prison camp.

KARL MENNING
(1874-1941)

Chargé d’affaires in Stockholm 1920-1921 Menning studied humanities and theology at University of Tartu. In Berlin he studied stage management and set design at M. Reinhardt’s studio. He was the leader and director of the Vanemuine Theatre in Tartu from 1906 to 1914. In 1918 he became a member of the Foreign Delegation and in January 1920 he was appointed chargé d’affaires to Scandinavia. He continued his career as a diplomat on the continent. Menning remained in the foreign service until he retired.

EDUARD VIRGO
(1878-1938)

Consul and chargé d’affaires in Stockholm 1921-1928. Virgo was trained as a marine officer and later studied social sciences at Sorbonne in Paris. After a life spent working in many fields, he became a member of the Foreign Delegation in 1918, working mainly in Finland and Italy. After his years as a consul and chargé d’affaires in Scandinavia, he continued his diplomatic work in Latvia. Virgo worked as a foreign trade office manager until his death.
FRIEDRICH KARL AKEL
(1871-1941)
Envoy in Stockholm 1928-1933
Akel studied medicine at University of Tartu and specialised as an ophthalmologist. Interested and active in politics, he was called into service as the envoy to Finland in 1922. Akel was the minister of foreign affairs in several governments. Between 1928 and 1933 he served as envoy for the Scandinavian countries, residing in Stockholm. He was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs from 1936 to 1938. In the autumn of 1940 he was arrested by the Soviet Union’s occupation army and was executed in Tallinn in July 1941.

KARL ROBERT PUSTA
(1883-1964)
Envoy in Stockholm 1935
Pusta studied social sciences in Paris and Bern. In 1918 he became a member of the Foreign Delegation, based in Paris. He represented Estonia at the peace negotiations in Paris in 1918. Pusta served as a diplomat in several countries, alternating those posts with assignments at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During 1935 he was the envoy in Stockholm. Pusta remained an Estonian diplomatic representative in Spain, France and Belgium until his death.

HEINRICH LARETEI
(1892-1973)
Envoy in Stockholm 1935-1940
Laretei studied economics at University of Tartu. He participated in World War I and in the Estonian War of Independence. He served as a minister in several governments. He was the envoy to the Soviet Union from 1926-1928 and to Lithuania until 1931. As the envoy in Scandinavia, based in Stockholm, he was forced to break off diplomatic relations by closing the legation in Stockholm in August 1940. He stayed in Sweden until his death.
MARGUS LAIDRE (1959)

Laidre studied history at the University of Tartu, and received a master’s degree in history in 1987 and a PhD in 2000. He has served as Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to Germany (1996-2000), the Holy See (1997-2000), Great Britain and Northern Ireland (2006-2010) and Finland (2014-2018). Since 2018, Laidre has been Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to the Russian Federation. From 2010 to 2014, Laidre was the foreign affairs adviser to the President of the Republic. Laidre is an acclaimed essayist and the author of a number of books on history and the history of diplomacy. Since 1995, Laidre has been an international member of the Swedish Royal Academy of War Sciences.

ANDRES UNGA (1966)
Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to the Kingdom of Sweden, 1996-2000

Unga is a 1991 graduate of the Tallinn University of Technology in the field of industrial electronics and a graduate of the Estonian School of Diplomacy. He started his diplomatic career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ State Protocol Department, serving as director general of the department from 1992 to 1996. From 1996 to 2000, Unga was Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to Sweden, and later was Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to Greece (2003-2007), the People’s Republic of China (2007-2012), and Southeast Asian countries (2012-2015), residing in Tallinn. Unga has also been director general of the Personnel Department (2000-2003). From 2015, Unga has been Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu and representative to ASEAN. Unga is a reserve officer and member of the Estonian Reserve Officers’ Association.
TOOMAS TIIVEL (1952)
Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to the
Kingdom of Sweden, 2000-2004

Tiivel, who has a PhD in biology, joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1992, being appointed as bureau director in the Political Department. From 1994 to 1998, Tiivel was Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to Latvia, then director of the ministry’s Internal Audit Department and its chief inspector (1998-2000), Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to Sweden and, from 2004 to 2006, director general of the State Protocol Department. From 2008 to 2010, Tiivel was the head commissioner for Estonia at Expo 2010 in Shanghai. In parallel to his work as a diplomat, he has lectured in biology and served as professor of biology at Tallinn University from 1993 to 1997. Tiivel has been on the editorial boards of a number of scientific journals. He is a member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts, and the Estonian Scientific Association in Sweden. Since 2005, he has been vice president of the Estonian Naturalists’ Society and from 2011, member of the research council of the Institute of Cybernetics at the Tallinn University of Technology. Since 2005, he has lectured on foreign policy (international organisations, protocol and etiquette, Chinese foreign policy) at the Tallinn University of Technology and the School of Diplomacy. He has been the president of the Academic English Club and is the president of the Whisky Club UBC. He is the author of numerous scientific articles and books.
ALAR STREIMANN (1964)
Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to the Kingdom of Sweden, 2007-2011

A 1989 graduate of the University of Tartu in the field of Romance and Germanic languages (English), Streimann joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1991. From 1993 to 1996, Streimann was foreign economic policy adviser at the Estonian Embassy in Sweden and following that, director general of the Foreign Ministry’s External Economic Policy Department (1996-1997). From 1997 to 2003, Streimann was the secretary general for European integration issues and from 1998 to 2003, the head of the delegation at the negotiations on EU accession. From 2003 to 2007, Streimann was ambassador and permanent representative at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and from 2007 to 2011 he was Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to Sweden. From 2011 to 2015, he was Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2015, Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves appointed Streimann Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to France, Monaco and Tunisia. Simultaneously he is Estonia’s Permanent Representative to the OECD and UNESCO.

JÜRI KAHN (1953)
Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to the Kingdom of Sweden, 2004-2006

Having received a master’s degree in economics in 1987, Kahn was Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to Russia from 1991 to 1995 and Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to Denmark from 1996 to 2001. Kahn has served in numerous positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 2001 to 2004, he was the head of the Foreign Relations Department at the Chancellery of the Riigikogu. Since 2014, Kahn has been adviser to Estonia’s representation to the EU in Brussels.
JAAK JÕERÜÜT (1947)
Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to the Kingdom of Sweden, 2011-2014

A graduate of the Tallinn Polytechnic Institute’s faculty of economics, Jõerüüt served as an Estonian diplomat from 1993 to 2015. He was Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to Finland (1993-1997), Italy (1998-2002), and concurrently to Malta (1999-2002) and Cyprus (1999-2004), the UN in New York (2004), Latvia (2006-2010) and Sweden (2011-2014). Jõerüüt has also been the director general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs protocol department and internal audit department. In 2004-2005, Jõerüüt was Defence Minister of the Republic of Estonia. Jõerüüt is a well-known essayist, prose writer and poet. Numerous works of his have been translated into many languages.

MERLE PAJULA (1960)
Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to the Kingdom of Sweden, 2015-2019

Pajula, a 1983 graduate of the University of Tartu in the field of Estonian language and literature, began working at what is now the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Press and Information Department, where she held the post of press secretary among other positions. From 1995 to 1998, Pajula was the counsellor for press at the Estonian Embassy in Helsinki and from 1998 to 2000 she was the Director General of the Press and Information Department. From 2000 to 2004, Pajula was Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN in New York. From 2004 to 2006, she was the Director of the Foreign Relations Department of the Chancellery of the Riigikogu, from 2006 to 2010, Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to Finland, and from 2010 to 2014, Director of the Policy Planning Office. Since 2015, Pajula is Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to Sweden. Pajula has contributed articles on the subject of literature and foreign relations, winning the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Beautiful Native Language award.
“Personally, I see the most important future topics for Nordic-Baltic cooperation as environmental protection, especially the marine environment and biosphere. If we are able to prepare for this together in our region, make something better in our immediate surroundings, we can undoubtedly influence the broader situation in the world.”

“Our digital infrastructure could be based on a similar technological platform as exists between Estonia and Finland, so that various cross-border projects could be developed on that platform. Over the years, consultations have been held with Sweden in this regard. We could tap into Sweden’s expertise on AI and smart cities, and for our part, we’re open to broad cooperation in regard to e-governance.”

Alar Streimann, Estonian Ambassador to Sweden, 2007-2011
Andres Unga, Estonian Ambassador to Sweden, 1996-2000
“Keeping in mind that Tallinn is the closest foreign capital to Stockholm, I am still astonished that many Stockholmers have never been to Estonia. The lack of interest can also be positively interpreted, of course: they don’t see a point to seek out what is so similar and close to them, yet at the same time it is of course our duty to advance and deepen knowledge and awareness about Estonia.”

Merle Pajula, Estonian Ambassador to Sweden, 2015-2019
EMBASSY BUILDINGS
THROUGHOUT HISTORY

1. KUNGSTRÄDGÅRDSGATAN 18
   The consulate opened in 1919 in the office of AS Estonia.

2. VASAGATAN 5
   From August 1919 to October 1920.
   The original building has been torn down and replaced.

3. RIDDARGATAN 76
   Starting in October 1920, rooms were rented here for the consulate. In June 1921 the new legation moved to STRANDVÄGEN 47.
   From May 1920 to October 1921, a flat was rented as the legation and residence.

4. STRANDVÄGEN 47
   From May 1920 to October 1921 a flat was rented as the legation and residence.

5. FREDSGATAN 2
   In September 1925 rooms were rented next to Gustav Adolfs torg.

6. NYBROGATAN 9
   From October 1925 to October 1927, a flat was rented on the second floor.

7. GREVGATAN 9
   Between October 1927 and October 1928, the legation rented here.

8. STUREGATAN 16
   This flat served as the legation from October 1928 to April 1939.

9. ÖSTERMALMSGATAN 43
   The legation’s last flat until 16 September 1940.

10. RÅDMANSGATAN 18
    Rooms were rented for the Estonian Information Bureau in the beginning of 1991. From October 1991 the Estonian Embassy shared the small rooms with the bureau.

11. STORGATAN 38
    Starting in the spring of 1992 the Embassy rented a flat on the first floor.

12. TYRGATAN 3
    In the spring of 1998 the Embassy moved to its own building on Tyrgatan.
Nine people work at the Estonian Embassy in Stockholm — six posted from Estonia and three employees permanently residing in Sweden. All of them are a calling card for Estonia in their field.

The ambassador is the highest official representative in relations with the country in which he or she is stationed. The ambassador’s duty is to make sure Estonia’s interests and needs are understood and supported in Sweden. In everyday work, it means meetings with many different people, explaining, listening, reading and writing. The ambassador is the head of mission, with the function of setting goals and laying the groundwork for effective work by colleagues.

The deputy head of mission supports the ambassador in performing his or her duties. The deputy head of mission represents Estonia’s political and security interests and contributes to promoting good and trust-based ties between Estonia and Sweden in the field of political relations and foreign policy. The deputy head of mission is also in charge of making sure that the Embassy operates in a well-functioning and legitimate manner from day to day.
The **economic affairs diplomat** promotes economic and business diplomacy. The goal is to support the growth of Estonian exports and introduce Estonia as a country with a good investment climate and strong IT sector, as Sweden is the leader in foreign investment into Estonia and is a very important trade partner.

The **defence attaché** is responsible for carrying out Estonian defence policy and ensuring national security through advancing defence and security cooperation between the Republic of Estonia and Kingdom of Sweden. The attaché represents the interests of the Estonian state and national defence structures and introduces and explains Estonia’s defence and security policy positions and information on national defence in the country in which he or she is stationed.

**Hosting of entrepreneurs, investors and cooperation partners.** Photo by Embassy
**Seniors from the Stockholm Estonian School at the Embassy.** Photo by Embassy
The consul provides services to Estonian citizens in the country, assisting them in emergencies and making sure the interests and rights of citizens are protected. The consul also provides consular services in cases set forth in legislation. Among other things, the consul issues visas and accepts applications for Estonian identity documents.

In addition to the consul, Estonia has honorary consuls in Sweden. Unlike the consul, these are citizens of the host country and do their work on a volunteer basis. We have seven honorary consuls in various regions of Sweden.

No representation could be effective without professional support staff. In Stockholm, these are the two secretaries — the ambassador’s assistant and the consular issues secretary — and the assistant to the defence attaché and administrative officer/driver, all of whom play an important role.
Meetings, briefings and seminars. Media brainstorming session at the Embassy. Photo by Embassy

Children and teachers from the Estonian kindergarten in Stockholm at the Embassy for the 101st anniversary of the Republic. Photo by Embassy
Meetings, briefings and seminars. Meeting between Estonian and Swedish cyber defence and comprehensive defence experts. Photo by Embassy

Delegation of education professionals from Estonia. Photo by Embassy
“For historical reasons, our development has proceeded at a different speed and for that reason we cannot de facto be a part of the action agenda that has taken shape between the Nordics. In the sense of image, the blue black and white cross flag, an image that would unite us completely with the Nordics, is a strong argument. In terms of ethnos, Estonians are no less Nordic than the Finns.”

“However, a Nordic course would help us delve into the Nordic world view and better understand the values there, and – why not – discover the beneficial aspects that Estonia too, could more boldly adopt.”

Andres Unga, Estonian Ambassador to Sweden, 1996-2000
Jüri Kahn, Estonian Ambassador to Sweden, 2004-2006
“The most important thing is not to let the “narcissism of small differences” bother us, but on the contrary, see them as development prospects and put the differences to work in the interests of the whole. We both respect other people’s personal space and believe that rules are meant to be followed.”

“Our personalities are mainly characterised by similarities, not so much differences. There is more of a clear understanding between us than with any other regional partner.”

Merle Pajula, Estonian Ambassador to Sweden, 2015-2019
Andres Unga, Estonian Ambassador to Sweden, 1996-2000
RESTORATION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

In the spring of 1990, a popular movement is founded to support the restoration of Baltic independence.

At noon on 79 Mondays from March 1990 to September 1991, well-attended meetings are held in 20-30 Swedish cities. At the heart of the movement are large public assemblies on Normalmstorg, a square in Stockholm.

**27 August 1991**
The Kingdom of Sweden re-recognises the Republic of Estonia and two days later the Swedish Ambassador Lars Arne Grundberg becomes the first foreign ambassador to serve in newly independent Estonia.

**April 1992**
State visit of Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia to Estonia.

**November 1993**
Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt delivers an historic speech in which he vows Sweden will not remain neutral if the Baltics are threatened by aggression.

**28 September 1994**
The passenger ferry M/S Estonia sinks on the stormy Baltic Sea, the greatest human tragedy on the Baltic Sea after World War II.

**September 1995**
State visit of Estonian President Lennart Meri to Sweden.

**April 1996**
Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson’s first foreign visit as prime minister is to Estonia.

**1 May 1997**
The Visa Abolition Agreement between Estonia and Sweden comes into effect.

**August 1999**
Official visit of Prime Minister Mart Laar to Sweden. In addition to ordinary protocol, the visit has symbolic parallels to the more distant past. Similarly to the official visit of State Elder Jaan Tõnisson in 1928, Laar arrived in Stockholm on an Estonian naval vessel and like in 1928, an official visit of high-ranking naval officers takes place in parallel to the visit. The naval flagship Sulev was opened to the public at the same time.

**May 2002**
King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia take part in the re-consecration of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church’s Swedish St Michael’s Church in Tallinn.

**October 2005**
Visit of President Arnold Rüütel to Sweden.

**November 2006**
Visit of President Toomas Hendrik Ilves to Sweden.

**September 2007**
Estonia was the focus of the 23rd Gothenburg Book Fair. Visit of President Toomas Hendrik Ilves to Stockholm.

**January 2011**
Visit of President Toomas Hendrik Ilves to Sweden.

**January 2012**
Working visit of President Toomas Hendrik Ilves to Sweden.

**January 2013**
President Toomas Hendrik Ilves attends the Själen Security Conference.

**October 2014**
Crown Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel visit Estonia.

**January 2017**
Visit of President Kersti Kaljulaid to Sweden.

**May 2018**
At Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian centenary celebrations in Skansen, Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström announces the idea of bilateral cooperation funds for promoting cooperation.

**June 2018**
Visit of President Kersti Kaljulaid to Gothenburg.
June 2018
Visit of the Estonian Navy’s minesweeper Sakala to Stockholm

August 2018
Crown Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel visit Estonia for national centenary celebrations. They also take part in the re-consecration of St Mary’s Church on the island of Naissaar
Swedish Crown Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel during their visit to Estonia, planting an oak in Kadriorg Park (August 2018). Photo by Annika Haas — Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Swedish King Gustaf V on a visit to Estonia (June 1929). Planting of oaks in Kadriorg Palace park. The king is pictured in the central part of the photo wearing an admiral's uniform. Photo by National Archive

Swedish Crown Princess Victoria and President of the Republic of Estonia Kersti Kaljulaid with their spouses by the oak planted by King Gustaf V (August 2018). Photo by Annika Haas – Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Swedish Crown Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel during their visit to Estonia, planting an oak in Kadriorg Park (August 2018). Photo by Annika Haas – Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs