



## Profile of Mr Mihkel Oviir

Auditor General of Estonia



Mihkel Oviir was appointed Auditor General of Estonia on 25 February 2003. On 26 February 2008 the Parliament appointed him for his second five-year term, by what Mihkel Oviir became the first Auditor General, who has been elected for the second term of office in the period after Estonia regained its independence.

He was born in Estonia at a small country place called Märjamaa during the II World War in 1942. Mr Oviir graduated *cum laude* from the Faculty of Law of the University of Tartu in 1975.

Mr Oviir has given great importance to the audit of environmental issues. In 2004 the National Audit Office earned the Award of a Green Deed of the Year for the performance audits carried out in this area under his leadership. The award is given by the Estonian Council of Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that unites the leading environmental NGOs of the country.

Before his appointment as Auditor General, Mr Oviir worked for almost 30 years at the Ministry of Justice, starting out as a Consultant, then Assistant to the Minister and Head of the Department of Business Law. After the liberation from the Soviet occupation and restoration of the independence of Estonia Mihkel Oviir began to build up a free and democratic legal system of Estonia. In 1992 he was appointed Secretary General of the Ministry of Justice, in which post he served for ten years. Mr Oviir's influence on developing modern Estonian legal environment has been very remarkable. Mr Oviir has also led the harmonization of Estonian legislation with that of the European Union.

Mihkel Oviir acted as an Expert of the Council of Europe in Armenia and Georgia in the years 1999 – 2000.

Being appointed Deputy Chancellor of Justice-Adviser by the Parliament in 2002, Mr Oviir worked at the Office of the Chancellor of Justice until his appointment to the post of the Auditor General by the Parliament in 2003. Mr Oviir is one of the founders of the Estonian Lawyers' Union and its first President.

In 2001 the President of Estonia awarded to him the Order of the White Star, 3rd class and in 2006 the Order of the National Coat of Arms, 3rd class. In 2008 the President of the Federal Republic of Germany awarded to Mr Oviir the Great Federal Merit Cross recognising his contribution to the building up of the Estonian legal system in cooperation with German lawyers.

Mihkel Oviir is married to Siiri Oviir, who is a lawyer and Member of the European Parliament (Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe). They have grown up three daughters, all of them also lawyers.