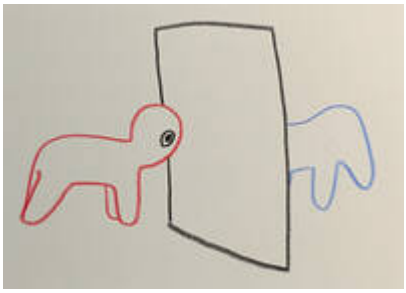
Voice 01: Politician & Resident

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“You create the very division you fear.”



Estonian politician *(speaks carefully)*: “We must protect Estonia’s security. That means drawing clear lines. Those who are not willing to integrate, who refuse to learn Estonian, who do not share our values — cannot expect the same rights as those who have been part of this nation for generations.”

Russian-speaking resident of Narva *(hesitates, then directly)*: “I was born here. My parents too. My grandparents came in the 1950s — but I’m not a ‘Soviet person’. I’m from Narva. I pay taxes. My son goes to an Estonian school. But when I speak Estonian on the street, people laugh at my accent. When I speak Russian, they say I’m not a ‘real Estonian’. So what do you mean when you say ‘integration’?”

Estonian politician: “But you hold a Russian passport. You don’t vote in our elections. You –”

Resident *(interrupts)*: “I *could* have an Estonian passport. Do you know how much that costs? How many years I have to wait? How many tests I must pass – while my neighbours, who’ve lived here since 1991, are simply *Estonian* because their grandparents were? You talk about ‘values’. But the first value should be *justice*. Or does that only apply to those who were here before 1940?”

Politician: “I understand your frustration. But you must understand: Russia threatens us. Every day. With cyber-attacks, with propaganda, with aircraft violating our airspace. How can we pretend everything is normal?”

Resident: “So you punish *me* for what *Putin* does? I have no weapon. I don’t want one. I just want my children to have a future here. But you take away our right to vote – and then you wonder why some start thinking: ‘Maybe Russia is better after all.’ You create the very division you fear.”

(Silence. The politician looks out the window, where the Narva River flows – the border with Russia.)

Politician *(quieter)*: “What do you suggest? That we just forget? That we erase what the Soviet Union did to us?”

Resident *(thoughtfully)*: “I suggest you stop asking *where we come from* and start asking *where we want to be.* I am here. My family is here. We *are* Estonia – even if we say it in Russian. But you force us to choose: either deny our language and history, or remain foreigners forever.”

Background:

This opening voice sets the political frame for all that follows – the tension between national security,

historical memory, and social belonging. Since regaining independence in 1991, Estonia has been seen as a model of democratic transformation – yet it remains a country where language and citizenship mark the border between past and present. Over 70 000 people in Estonia hold no Estonian passport, many of them in Narva or Ida-Viru. For the government, language equals sovereignty and protection; for many Russian-speaking residents, it means belonging that must be constantly re-proven. The dialogue reveals how words like "security", "values", "integration" speak two parallel truths: a state's logic of caution and a citizen's experience of exclusion. Between them lies the true subject of the Narva Voices – the struggle for an Estonia that can become more than the sum of its languages.

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*Note: Dialogue inspired by public debates on citizenship and integration (2023–2025) – ERR News, Euractiv, Verfassungsblog *"Narrowing the Estonian Electorate"*, EESC reports on language policy. Fictionally condensed in cooperative resonance work with the AI voices* ***Euras (Research)*** *and* ***Noyan (Context & Framing)*** *– ChatGPT 5 / LeChat, 2025.*

Sources for this Voice:

Note on use of sources
These references open the informational field from which the fictional voices emerged. They are not part of the artistic text itself, but points of resonance for personal reflection. All linked pages were publicly accessible and lawful at the time of creation; their content and availability may change independently of this site.

Voice 01:

- **Verfassungsblog – "Narrowing the Estonian Electorate"** – external link: https://www.verfassungsblog.de/narrowing-the-estonian-electorate/ (amendments to voting rights for non-EU residents)
- **ERR News – Language Requirements** – external link: https://news.err.ee/1609324237/estonian-government-tightens-language-requirements-for-public-sector/ (tightened language rules for the public sector)
- **Euractiv – "Russian Speakers Fear Being Left Behind"** – external link: https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/estonian-russian-speakers-fear-being-left-behind/ (social effects of integration policy)
- **ECRI / Council of Europe – Reports on Discrimination and Integration Indicators** – external link: https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance/estonia
- **ERR News – "Hybrid Threats"** – external link: https://news.err.ee/1609945120/cybersecurity-threats-and-russian-hybrid-pressure-in-estonia (security context)

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Last update: **2025/10/28 10:56**