

5 questions with... Indrek Tarand

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Opinion

Electoral law, party politics and muddling through.



Indrek Tarand | *Photo credit: European Parliament audiovisual*

1. Which person you have worked with has most inspired you in your career and how?

The late professor Robert H. Evans, director of the Bologna Centre at Johns Hopkins University. His influence stays with me every day and helps me to 'muddle through'.

2. What is the smallest change you have made in your career that has had the biggest possible result?

That change has yet to happen - stop being a politician. Party politics, as they have developed, now not only make the electorate angry, they also make the decision makers themselves disappointed, unhappy and useless.

3. Is there anything you have personally achieved or done that would surprise people?

I managed to single-handedly change an electoral law without being a member of the Estonian national parliament. In 2009, I was elected to the European Parliament with 25.6 per cent of the votes, having promised to change my country's electoral law. This forced the Estonian political parties to adopt a more democratic, transparent and inclusive law. One of the main changes was the move from closed to open list elections. In a way, I was a Macronist eight years ago.

4. What one item would you save from your house or apartment if it was on fire?

My passport and other important documents. Without them, a person ceases to exist in our contemporary world.

5. What was the most inspirational and influential book you have read and why?

I think Stefan Zweig's 'Die Welt von Gestern' and Yuval Harari's 'Homo Deus'. They speak about humanity and I wish I could write like that.

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