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3. In March the Supreme Council approved the government's draft Citizenship Law. Largely based on its predecessor of 1938, it is liberal by any standards. It has however become a major issue in Estonian-Russian relations. Moscow considers it discriminatory in that it denies automatic citizenship to the large (35 per cent) Russian community in Estonia who are therefore unable to stand or vote in elections to the National Assembly. And there are signs of some sympathy for this view in the West following Moscow's propaganda campaign. The Estonian argument is that one cannot disenfranchise those who are non-citizens to begin with, whether by birth or failure to meet residence qualifications. It is a tricky issue which I suspect will run and run. But, at the same time, the Citizenship Law was perhaps the year's key piece of legislation, paving the way for a referendum on the draft Constitution in June and subsequent elections in September.

4. The June referendum overwhelmingly endorsed the draft Constitution which was adopted in July. Shortly afterwards elections for President of the Republic and to the 101-member National Assembly (Riigikogu) were announced for 20 September. Three main coalitions contested the elections: Isamaa (Fatherland), an alliance of right-wing nationalist and Christian Democratic parties; Kindel Kodu (Safe Home), a grouping of former nomenklatura from industrial and agricultural backgrounds who claimed to have enthusiastically embraced free market principles, and Rahvarinne (Popular Front), Savisaar's left of centre party plus a few independents.

5. Foreign observers all reported that they found the elections free and fair. Isamaa won most seats and, in alliance with the Moderates (Social Democrats etc.) and the Estonian National Independence Party (far right), formed a Government under Mart Laar, the 32-year-old Christian Democrat. Isamaa's Lennart Meri, former Foreign Minister and Ambassador to Finland, was elected President by the Riigikogu. Although Arnold Ruutel, President of the Supreme Council and Kindel Kodu's candidate, got 18 per cent more of the popular vote than Meri, he failed to achieve an absolute majority. It thus fell to the Riigikogu to choose between the two and it was a foregone conclusion that Meri would win.

6. Meri and Laar make an interesting pairing. Both see eye to eye on most major issues but not all. Under the new Constitution executive power is vested in the Prime Minister leaving the President with a more constitutional, representational role. Given his maverick past there was room to doubt whether he would accept this back seat. Inevitably he has chosen to dabble in foreign