



Eesti Vabariigi Suursaatkond
Embassy of the Republic of Estonia
Oslo

Mr Kjell Bø Bjørgum
Mayor of Aurland

Our: No 1-11/11
Oslo, 7 May 2024

Honourable Mayor of Aurland

Dear Kjell,

I would like to take this opportunity and on behalf of the Estonian Embassy in Oslo express my gratitude and thank you and all Norwegians for keeping Estonia and Norway relationship permanent and strong in many ways. In today's world it is important to have strong relationship with alliances that you can count on. Therefore, I would like to emphasise also the importance of history and our historic ties, as an Estonian poet J. Liiv has said once "He who does not remember the past, lives without a future".

I have learnt that the way the people of Flåm helped the Estonian warship Begonia crew at the end of April 1940 and gave Captain Mihkel Kägi, an Estonian seaman, a dignified burial is an example of solidarity in its best sense. Captain Kägi was tragically killed on the Estonian ship Begonia during a Nazi German attack on 25 April 1940. I know that there is a tradition, the mayor of Aurland lays a wreath on the grave of Mihkel Kägi every year on the 8th of May. I am equally delighted that Mrs Hege B. Grundekjøn, Norwegian war historian, is working currently on the book project about the Estonian seafarers, and I am confident that Captain Kägi's story is one of those that is given in Estonian-Norwegian history book.

On the tombstone of Captain Kägi, it is written that he came from Estonia. Until Estonia regained its independence in 1991, this information in its way helped to remind of Estonia's existence as a country that was free and independent until 1940. I am truly pleased that our heroes who fought for our freedom have never forgotten also in Norway.

Once again, dear Mayor, please accept my gratitude for taking care of the grave of brave Estonian seaman on the same date every year, in order to mark the freedom day in Norway. Wish you and all Norwegian friends in Aurland lots of luck and happiness. Looking forward to enhancing the wide range of cooperation between our people and countries.

Kind regards,

Lauri Bambus
Ambassador of Estonia