



THE RIGHT TO VOTE – TRUST IN LAW.  
*One hundred years of Finnish democracy.*

A hundred years ago Finland was an autonomous part of the Russian Empire. The members of the four Estates in the then autonomous legislative assembly, the Diet, represented only a small fraction of the population. A reform of the parliamentary system and electoral law gave Finland the first modern representative institution in the world. Universal and equal suffrage was introduced and Finnish women became the first in the world to enjoy full political rights.

### **Eduskunta to assemble for two Festive Sessions**

The first Festive Session and gala will take place on Thursday 1 June 2006. That will be the 100th anniversary of the date on which the Estates approved the new parliamentary system and electoral law. A resolution creating an independent institute of international relations and EU affairs will be adopted at the Festive Session.

The second Festive Session will take place on Wednesday 23 May 2007, the centenary of the first plenary session of the unicameral Eduskunta.

A resolution putting funding for women's organisations on an established basis will be adopted at the second Festive Session.

### **Centenary General Election 2007**

The 200 Representatives who will serve in the Eduskunta for the 2007-10 parliamentary term will be chosen in the Centenary General Election on 18 March 2007. All Finnish citizens who have reached the age of 18 by the date of the election will be eligible to vote.

## **Festive events all over Finland**

A large number of events and seminars of various kinds will be arranged in many parts of Finland during the Centenary year. The themes for the Centenary will be included in school curricula throughout the year.

In July the Eduskunta will take part in the SuomiAreena (Finland Arena) summer event in Pori. The premiere of an opera commissioned by the Eduskunta together with the Savonlinna Opera Festival will take place in July 2007.

The seminar “*Visionary Ideas*” will take place in Kajaani in November 2006. The evacuated Eduskunta convened in the town of Kauhajoki during the 1939–1940 Winter War and this will be commemorated with special festivities to be held in Kauhajoki at the end of 2006. A seminar focusing on athletics and exercise will take place in town of Lahti during spring 2007.

## **Commemorative postage stamp and jubilee coin for the Centenary**

In 2000 the Finnish Parliament, in collaboration with the Department of Political History at the University of Turku, launched a project aiming at documenting the History of the

Finnish Unicameral Parliament. The resulting twelve-volume history of the Finnish Parliament will be published as part of the jubilee year.

A commemorative postage stamp was published in February 2006. A jubilee coin and a medal will be issued during the year and several books will be published. A sculpture by *Eila Hiltunen* honouring the work of female members of the Eduskunta, as well as universal and equal suffrage, will be placed in the small park adjacent to the 2004 Annex and unveiled in a June 2006 ceremony.

The Eduskunta history and its role in shaping Finnish society will be featured in an exhibition touring regional libraries in Finland. The exhibition will be presented in its English-, German-, French-, Spanish-, Russian-, Japanese- and Chinese-language versions in various cities around the world.

The Centenary Year themes will also be reflected in events arranged during Finland’s tenure of the European Union Presidency for the latter half of the year.

- For additional info on events during the Centenary Year see the Eduskunta web site: [www.parliament.fi/100](http://www.parliament.fi/100)

IMPORTANT DATES DURING THE EDUSKUNTA'S CENTENARY YEAR

**1.6.2006** First Festive Session of the Eduskunta

*On 1 June 1906 the Estates adopted the new parliamentary system and electoral law.*

**18.3.2007** Centenary Elections 2007

**23.5.2007** Second Festive Session of the Eduskunta

*On 23 May 1907 the unicameral Eduskunta assembled for its first plenary session.*