



## **The Republic of Estonia turns 100 – and two endangered bird species get 100 new nests**

Estonia is a country in Northern Europe, of approximately the same size as Switzerland. The population of Estonia is 1.3 m and official language is Estonian, a Finno-Ugric language. Around 400 Estonians live currently in Switzerland, and the Swiss Estonian Society has been active here for more than 60 years, preserving and fostering Estonian language and culture far away from homeland. In 2018, it will be 100 years since Estonia got independent for the first time. To celebrate this important birthday, the Swiss Estonian Society has launched, among other things, a project that aims to protect endangered bird species, symbolizing the protection that all small nations need.

In cooperation with the Swiss nature conservation organization “Birdlife”, we have selected two endangered bird species that need help: The Redstart and the Wryneck. Just as there are not many Estonians, there are only few of these birds left, and just as there are efforts needed for our small nation to persist, measures need to be taken to help the Redstart and Wryneck to abide. We have therefore decided to protect and help these two bird species and donate them 100 new birdhouses. Just as Switzerland has become the new home for Estonians living here, we are now supporting local endangered birds with a new and secure nest.

How will this be done?

Every Estonian living in Switzerland and local friends of Estonia can support the project by donating one or more birdhouses. The birdhouses will be made by carpenter and teacher Peeter Tarmet in Geneva and provided with the name of the donator. In cooperation with “Birdlife”, the houses will be set up in spring 2018 in Basel and Bellinzona – in two areas where there are still some Redstarts and Wrynecks living. Biologists of “Birdlife” will make sure that the new birdhouses are in places that are safe – away from strollers and raptors that could in any way threaten the nests. “Birdlife” will also maintain and control the birdhouses and, if possible, let us know which ones the birds have chosen for breeding.

The birdhouses can be ordered until the end of August 2017.

More information is available on the homepage of the Swiss Estonian Association:

<http://www.eestiselts.ch/about/estonia100>

### **Mirjam Loertscher**

President of Swiss Estonian Association

8405 Winterthur, Switzerland

Email: [estoswiss@gmail.com](mailto:estoswiss@gmail.com)

Tel: + 41 79 377 4156