

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves today presented the Young Scientist Award of the Cultural Foundation of the President of the Republic and prize money of 5,000 euros to Lili Milani, Senior Research Fellow of the Estonian Genome Center of the University of Tartu and the Head of the Genotyping and Sequencing Core Facility.

The Estonian Head of State stated that the overview of the achievements of Lili Milani left him speechless – to date, she has completed research papers and received letters of recommendation from the Estonian Genome Center, University of Tartu, Uppsala University and Karolinska Institute.

"These texts were devoid of standard politeness. These brimmed with confidence. They were full of pride with the current career of a young and highly talented researcher and colleague," told the Head of State. President Ilves added that Milani, as an outstanding scientist, has taken Estonia, her research team, her university and her research institution to the top of the world with her.

Swedish-born Lili Milani acquired a master's degree in genome technology at the University of Tartu and then defended her doctoral degree in 2009 in Uppsala University in the speciality of molecular medicine. After defending her doctoral degree, she returned to Estonia and started a career at Estonian Genome Center of the University of Tartu, where today she heads up the Genotyping and Sequencing Core Facility.

Milani thanked everyone for their faith in her and for being open to new ideas in genetics. "There are so many lovely people in my life," the young scientist added.

The main research spheres of Milani include human genomics, epigenomics and pharmacogenomics, including variability of decomposing pharmacological products in both healthy individuals and differences in genomes and epigenomes in both sick and healthy individuals.

Andres Metspalu, Professor of Biotechnology of the University of Tartu and Director of the Estonian Genome Center, highlighted the contribution to pharmacogenetics among the most

important research results of Milani. "She has implemented new methods in the core facility of the Estonian Genome Center that are not only used for research purposes but also to diagnose serious genetic diseases," stated Metspalu in a letter of recommendation sent to the Office of the President, and he added that epigenetics is a another sphere where Milani is a top researcher at global level.

Milani has been awarded the Anna Lundin stipend, which is given to outstanding doctor degree students of Uppsala University. Apart from regular research work, Milani is a welcome lecturer at conferences in her sphere and is also a supervisor for many doctor, master and bachelor degree theses in University of Tartu. In the last two years alone, she has published more than 20 research papers in magazines such as Genome Research, Nature, Science, Nature Genetics, BMC Genomics, and others.

The Young Scientist Award is granted once a year by the Cultural Foundation of the President of the Republic and is financed by Väino Kaldoja.

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