

The President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, will present state awards to 99 people on the eve of the 97th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia to acknowledge the services they have given to Estonia.

"Estonia thanks and recognises with honorary decorations people from different walks of life both from home and abroad for their commitment to their everyday work, their vocation and to making Estonia better, which is worthy of the greatest thanks our country can extend," writes President Ilves in the resolution to grant the decorations.

Order of the National Coat of Arms, Class I, will be awarded to two-time Vice-President of the European Commission, **Siim Kallas**; Order of the National Coat of Arms, Class II, will be awarded to the Prime Minister of Republic of Estonia from 2005 to 2014,

Andrus Ansip

; and Order of the National Coat of Arms, Class III, to the Chancellor of Justice,

Indrek Teder

Estonia acknowledges and recognises people who take notice, care and help. Order of the Estonian Red Cross will be granted to developer of surgical techniques, long-term Associate Professor of the University of Tartu, teacher and mentor of many young colleagues, **Urmas**

Lepner

; Medical Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery of North-Estonian Hospital and lung cancer surgeon

Tõnu Vanakesa

, who has performed surgery on approximately 70 lung cancer patients; the Head of Pirita Family Doctor Centre and one of the founders of the centre, family doctor

Kaja Arbeiter

;

Mart-Peeter Erss

, who has been in charge of the Social Welfare Department of North Tallinn for over 10 years and also represents the Estonian Social Welfare Association at the EAPN (European Anti Poverty Network); the long-term chairwoman of the South-Estonian Association of Visually Impaired People,

Eva Kirillova

, who lost her eyesight to a disease and has demonstrated through her activities that even people who have lost their sight can work efficiently; one of the initiators and leaders of KiVa, a programme that combats bullying in schools,

Rasmus Rask

, who has also contributed to a project aimed at anticipating and preventing dependencies in

young persons, Tark Vanem (Wise Parent).

Honorary decorations will also be awarded to people who promote our educational life: **Anne Kõiv**,

who has worked over 40 years at a special school for children with visual disabilities – Tartu Emajõe School – and was one of the people who laid down the foundations for the educational counselling of children with visual disabilities; the long-term director of Saaremaa Joint Gymnasium,

Viljar Aro

, who is known for the organisation of mini science days and singing competitions; music scientist, pedagogue and acknowledged lecture at Tallinn Music High School and the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre,

Leida-Tiia Järg

; teacher of disabled children, Tuition Manager at Tallinn Tondi Basic School and one of the founders of the Estonian Logopaedic Society,

Linnu-Lydia Mae

; long-term professor of the Faculty of Architecture and Environmental Technology at Tallinn University of Applied Sciences,

Viiu Sillaste

; art teacher and painter,

Helle-Reet Paris (Vahersalu)

, who has worked at Tartu Art School since 1967, also teaches at Tartu Art College and who is a proud advocate for maintaining and supporting the painting traditions of Tartu.

Estonia thanks its acknowledged scientists and professors. The Order of the White Star will be awarded to the Vice Rector for Research of the Estonian University of Life Sciences and veterinary medicine and animal husbandry professor with world-class qualifications, **Ülle**

Jaakma,

whose field of research include breeding for the purposes of animal husbandry and in vitro fertilisation; Dean of Department of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of Tallinn University of Technology, Professor

Tõnis Kanger

, who is one of the founders of asymmetric organocatalysis in Estonia; Professor of physiological genomics of the University of Tartu,

Sulev Kõks

, who is also a spiritual architect of the Transplant Medicine Centre, which is to be established at Maarjamõisa Medical Campus; professor of electronics at Tallinn University of Technology and Director of the Thomas Johann Seebeck Department of Electronics,

Toomas Rang

, whose research work focuses on semiconductor electronics; Head of the Jõgeva Seed Centre of the Estonian Crop Research Institute and breeder of crop varieties,

Gunnar Koll

, who has made a huge contribution to the development of seed production and economy over many years; literary scientist and semiotic

Mihhail Lotman

, who also works as professor of cultural theories at Tallinn University and as a senior research fellow at the Department of Semiotics of the Institute of Philosophy and Semiotics of University of Tartu; academician

Karl Pajusalu

, professor of the history of the Estonian language and dialects at the University of Tartu, who has studied South-Estonian dialects and was one of the editors of the first dictionary of Mulgi (a historic region in the southern part of Estonia) dialect in Estonia; the director of the Estonian Literary Museum,

Janika Kronberg

, who is also a literary scientist and critic and has studied the creative works of Karl Ristikivi, Bernard Kangro, Karl Ast, Heiti Talvik, Villem Grünthal and Henrik Visnapuu; the linguist, researcher of Fenno-Ugric languages and compiler of dictionaries,

Paul Kokla

, who has compiled work done over decades into a dictionary of Hiiumaa (one of the largest islands) within the Estonian dialect dictionary; classic philologist and theologian, lector of Patristics and Latin language of the Chair of Church History of the Faculty of Theology of University of Tartu,

Marju Lepajõe

, who has compiled the "Greek-Estonian New Testament Study Dictionary", translated the works of Plato and Plotinos and has studied Ancient Greek, Ancient Roman and early Christian literature, Platonist and new Platonist philosophy and early Christian monastic theology; a promoter of natural science education, an individual who has strongly contributed to the popularity of science, long-term chief editor of magazine Horisont (Horizon), translator and editor, and scriptwriter for a number of films on nature,

Indrek Rohtmets

.

The Order of the White Star will be awarded to choreographer **Maido Saar**, General Choreographer of the 26th Estonian Dance Celebration "Touch", a founder and artistic director of the "Lee" dance company for children and young people, which has provided the choreography for approximately 100 hundred dances for Estonian-themed issues; choir leader and one of the developers of the boys' and men's choir movement,

Hirvo Surva

, who was also the artistic director of the Estonian Song and Dance Celebration "Touched by Time. The Time to Touch", and two youth song celebrations as well as associate professor of the Conducting Department of the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre; musician and composer

Vaiko Eplik

, who has been involved in bands Claire's Birthday, Ruffus, Koer, Vaiko Eplik ja Eliit and who created the music for the animated film "Suur maalritöö" (The Great Painter); composer, arranger and guitar player,

Tõnis Kõrvits

, who has written lots of music, particularly for children; musician

Margus Kappel

, who has played in rock bands Ruja, Kaseke and Rock Hotel as well as jazz in Lembit Saarsalu's band; one of the founders of Hortus Musicus, singer and arranger of religious music,

Riho Ridbeck

, who is also the Chief Conductor of KOSK choir and a long-term conductor of the chamber choir of the congregation of the Church of Holy Spirit of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church; founder of the band Svjata Vatra (Holy Flame) and introducer of Estonian and Ukrainian folk culture and music,

Ruslan Trochynskyi

, who has also mediated donations collected in Estonia for Eastern Ukraine.

Honorary decorations will also be awarded to the following individuals, who have enriched cultural and artistic life: theatre director and producer **Peeter Jalakas**, one of the founders of VAT Theatre and the Von Krahl Theatre, who also started the international Baltoscandal theatre festival and was the artistic director of the event for a long time; an artist known for his powerful nature and unique pattern as a producer and organiser of punk song festival,

Üllar Saaremäe

, who is also the Stage Director of Rakvere Theatre; film maker,

Veiko Õunpuu

, who is known for his movies "Tühirand" (Desolate Beach), "Sügisball" (Autumn Ball), "Püha Tõnu kiusamine" (The Temptation of St. Tony) and "Free Range"; theatre critic

Pille-Riin Purje

, who is also the author of a number of books on the history of theatre and editor of Raadioteater (Radio Theatre); professor emeritus of the Estonian Academy of Arts, architect

Veljo Kaasik

, who is renowned for having a socially alert mind in the sphere of architectural spaces;

Mare Vint

, a graphic artist characterised by an individual and memorable artistic hand, who has produced drawings in pencil and ink but has mostly focused on lithography for over 40 years; textile artist,

Ehalill Halliste

, who has taken part in more than one hundred different exhibitions with her works and has also been an art teacher at Kohila Gymnasium; caricaturist and illustrator

Hillar Mets

, who has worked at Theatre Vanemuine, Joonisfilm (Animated Film Studio) and magazine Pikker and at the Eesti Päevaleht daily paper for the last 17 years; illustrator and caricaturist of daily paper Postimees for the past 20 years,

Urmas Nemvalts

; the oldest working actress in Estonia,

Leida Rammo

, who has starred in approximately 70 films and worked at the Drama, Estonia, Endla, Youth and Rakvere theatres; poet, prose writer and translator

Igor Kotjuh

, who last year was awarded a poetry prize for Cultural Endowment in the category of Russian literature; theatre, TV and movie actor, Grand Old Man

Feliks Kark

, who has given us dozens of roles in both Rakvere Theatre and Pärnu Endla and in many movies, and is also one of the keepers of the traditions of harmonica playing.

Estonia thanks and acknowledges our members of the Defence Forces and officials who defend our national security. Order of the Cross of Eagle will be awarded to the Commander of the Military Intelligence Centre, Lieutenant Colonel **Kaupo Rosin**, who is a highly respected co-operation partner at both national and international level; Assistant Team Leader of the Narva District of the Defence League, Corporal

Aleksandr Pavlov

; police lieutenant

Kert Kotkas

, who works as the head of district at the constable department of the City of Tartu; negotiator of the crisis regulation team of North Police Prefecture, police lieutenant

Reimo Raivet

, who is also one of the founders of the negotiation unit and works as chief of the child protection service of the North Police Prefecture on a daily basis; Police Captain

Andrei Taratuhin

, who started his service in the police forces in 1992 as a patrol warden and has now been promoted to the position of Head of Criminal Police in Lääne county. He has led a number of operations resulting in the capture of criminals and convictions for crime and other complicated proceedings; Piusa cordon dog handler, border guard constable

Kersti Nüüd

, who has successfully taken part, with service dog Aron, in catching people illegally crossing the border, detecting illicit merchandise and searching for people lost in the forest; officials of the Estonian Internal Security Service,

Arne Hass

and

Toomas Õmblus

.

The Order of the White Star will be awarded to teacher of national defence studies, member of the Defence Forces and promoter of local life, **Marko Tiirmaa**, who is a pastor of Otepää Maarja (Holy Mary's) congregation of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church and is also a chaplain at the Valga District of the Estonian Defence League. He also gives national defence classes both in Otepää Gymnasium and the Russian language Annelinna Gymnasium in Tartu.

An honorary decoration will also be awarded to **Mihkel Karja**, head of the conveyor transport

department of Estonian mines, who has worked in the mines since 1972 and has initiated a number of technological innovations.

Orders of the White Star will be awarded to the following promoters and supporters of local life: the keeper of the history of Narva and creator of a pre-war model of old town of Narva, **Fedor Shantsyn**

; the founder of Koela Farm Museum in Läänemaa,

Saamo Heldema

, who has worked for years to identify and maintain archaeological monuments in Läänemaa and is highly respected for his blacksmith work; CEO of NGO Hiidlaste Koostöökogu (Hiiumaa Co-operation Network),

Reet Kokovkin

, who has also lead the Estonian Assembly of Islands and the Research and Education Centre of Hiiumaa "Tuuru"; one of the founders of the Lahemaa Rahwamuusikud (Lahemaa Folk Musicians) group and one of the group leaders for 40 years, as well as being an organiser of the Lahemaa bag pipe festivals and teacher at Haljala Gymnasium,

Viivi Voorand

.

Orders of the White Star will also be awarded to one of the initiators and leaders of the Jewish community in Estonia, **Gennadi Gramberg**, who has promoted co-operation between our ethnic minorities for years, and **Valdeko Kalma**, who has led the wrestling club of Viljandi, Tulevik (the Future), for almost a quarter of a century.

Estonia acknowledges people who advance our business sector. Honorary decorations will be awarded to the owner of OÜ Mätiku farm, **Aivar Pikk mets**, from Koonga rural municipality, Pärnu county, an acknowledged organic farmer, whose family has run the farm for 20 years; the founder and developer of TransferWise,

Kristo Käärmann

; Saaremaa ship builder,

Sven Lennart Alpstål

, who has also supported the development of local life and education;

Mart-Järvo Hirtentreu

, Chairman of the Management Board of KONESKO, a company that produces electric engines and wind turbines in its facilities in Koeru and Põltsamaa;

Leida Kikka

, a majority shareholder in Samelin AS, a company based on Estonian capital that features the long-term traditions of manufacturing footwear and exports its products all over the world;

Indrek Laul

, the owner of Estonian Pianos and producer of grand pianos Estonia, which is a successful

export product and one of the symbols of Estonia;

Hellar Mutle

, CEO and one of the owners of Bestra Engineering, a company that manufactures high-tech high quality equipment in Viljandi county, and who is also the Chairman of the Council of Viljandi rural municipality; creator of GrabCAD and supporter of educational life in Estonia,

Hardi Meybaum

.

From the IT sphere, honorary decorations will be awarded to the globally acknowledged computer scientist, **Timothy Berners-Lee**, who invented breakthrough internet technologies, such as the network protocol http or Hyper Text Transfer Protocol and the first web browser, WorldWideWeb; informatics doctor, **Dan Bogdanov**, a research specialist at Cybernetica, who leads the development of a privacy ensuring computer system, Sharemind, and its applications; cybernetics scientist and founder of company GuardTime and professor of Tallinn University of Technology,

Ahto Buldas

; the initiator of distribution of free WIFI,

Veljo Haamer

.

Estonia thanks those journalists whose work and creations in various media publications have enriched our world view. Orders of the White Star will be awarded to Operating Editor of Pärnu Postimees newspaper, **lira Igasta**, whose balanced mind and demanding nature have been the foundation of one of the largest and most professional county papers for many years;

Riina Rõõmus

, Editor in Charge of Vikerraadio, a radio station with the largest audience in Estonia and one that is renowned for merging a socially sensitive approach and closeness to people; radio and TV journalist

Silvi Karro

, who has worked as an editor at ETV on the "Maahommik" (Morning in the Countryside) programme for 15 years and is also the author of a number of books.

A number of civil servants are also being acknowledged. Honorary decorations will be granted to the Secretary General of the Ministry of Defence, **Mikk Marran**, as one of the promoters of our defence policies and defence abilities; to the Head of the Legal Services Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, **Marika**

Kairjak

, an undeniable authority in the sphere of the common agricultural and fisheries policy of the European Union;

Celia Kuningas-Saagpakk

, who has been in foreign service for more almost twenty years and currently serves as the Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia in Italy;

Tuuli Duneton

, defence adviser at the Permanent Representation of Estonia to NATO; Public Prosecutor

Inna Ombler

, who has been in charge of the pre-trial investigation of complicated corruption crimes. The Order of the White Star will also be awarded to auditor

Mati Nõmmiste

, one of the initiators of the Estonian Board of Auditors.

The Order of the Estonian Red Cross will be granted to voluntary blood donors – **Taimi Allas** from Türi, Järvamaa, who has donated blood 149 times and thereby helped approximately 450 patients and

Peeter Hallist

from Tartu and

Vello Vaarmets

from Tarvastu, Viljandi county, who have both donated blood 100 times.

The Order of the Cross of Eagle will be granted to **Viktor Preimann**, who took part in the defence battles in Finland and has recorded the memories of the Sons of Finland. The Cross of Merit of the White Star will be granted to the warden of repressed citizens, one of the initiators of the foundation and activities of the Memento Association of Saare County and the Estonian Memento Union, **Rein Väli**.

The Republic of Estonia says 'thank you' to its supporters abroad. Honorary decorations will be awarded to the legendary **Elmer MacKay**, whose family helped many of the people who escaped from Estonia at the end of World War II build new homes and find jobs in Canada; former Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden,

Carl Bildt

, as a supporter of co-operation in the Baltic sea area and security in Europe; Board member and Financial Director of Swedbank AB,

Nils Göran Bronner

, who offered an immediate and direct contribution to securing the competitiveness of the financial sector of Estonia and other Baltic states during the last global financial crisis; former Commissioner for Competition and then Commissioner for Digital Agenda,

Neelie Kroes

, and promoter of the European common digital market;

Marcus Kolga

, Chairman of the Board of the Estonian Foundation in Canada and the creator of a number of documentaries; professor of history at Yale University,

Timothy Snyder

, who focuses on the history of Central and Eastern Europe and is the author of an influential book that describes the recent history of Europe, "Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin"; one of the keepers of the cultural bridge between Estonia and Finland and a long term cultural and political journalist at the Helsingin Sanomat newspaper,

Saska Saarikoski

;

Zinaida Strogalštšikova

, who was the founder of Vepsic Cultural Society and has led the activities of the organisation for the last 25 years;

Christopher P. Skaluba

, Director for NATO and European Policy of the Department of Defense of the United States of America, who plays a huge role in strengthening the collective defence and deterrence of the alliance; former director of the Latvian Constitution Protection Bureau,

Janis Kažociņš

, a promoter of security co-operation between Estonia and Latvia; one of the initiators and architects of the presence of allied forces in NATO's border states of the region, Commander of U.S. Army Europe, Lieutenant General

Frederick Ben Hodges

;

Alan Teder

, who has introduced Estonian music culture and supported Estonian musicians in Canada for many years.

Official text of the decision on granting the honorary decorations is available here: <http://president.ee/et/ametitegevus/otsused/11028-576-riiklike-autasude-andmine/index.html>

President Ilves will hand over the honorary decorations on the eve of Independence Day, 23 February, in Rakvere Theatre at a official event entitled "Estonia Says Thank You".

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