

"Tallinn University of Technology is one of the pillars of the Estonia's future as I don't know any countries successfully competing in the 21st century without a good technical education," said the President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, at the inauguration of the Rector of Tallinn University of Technology, Academician Jaak Aaviksoo. "For this reason, the rector of your university is important both for the university and for Estonia, as the Rector of Tallinn University of Technology will shape the future and progress of our country considerably. This represents a huge responsibility."

The future of Estonia depends on top-level teaching and studying of real, natural and exact sciences and possibly much more than we may think at first. As young people see Estonian-developed technology and innovation taking over the world – as we have already seen in a case of a number of companies – they will believe in Estonia and the education we provide, said the Head of State. According to the President, the development of strong centres of excellence, education and research work that focuses on the future, as well as strong international partnerships and co-operation with the business sector to allow modern Estonian entrepreneurship and contemporary Estonia benefit from modern science are all inevitable in order to achieve this goal.

Maintaining our small country, our education, science and culture will require more per capita than in larger countries: more money and more wisdom, stated President Ilves.

He also invited people to admit that duplication of higher education is a rare luxury item in a country with a population of 1.3 million, and we must more seriously consider the rationality of such an arrangement; he also wished for our higher education to focus, more than ever, on interdisciplinary aspects. 65 years ago, C.P. Snow, a Cambridge University professor of physical chemistry and well-known writer, wrote about two cultures, humanitarian and natural sciences, which could no longer communicate in universities as if they could not understand each other.

Today, natural sciences and, above all, high-tech technology have left universities behind and inhabit our everyday lives.

"I am quite sure that Tallinn University of Technology will maintain its ambition to be among the best universities of the world," encouraged President Ilves. "May you follow the goal of being

one of the universities that offers a good, useful reason for our young people to remain in Estonia to learn through the medium of the Estonian language and then find themselves jobs in Estonia."

The Head of State thanked the former Rector, Andres Keesvallik, for the development of Tallinn University of Technology and handed over the inaugural medal of the Rector of the Tallinn University of Technology to the new Rector, Academician Jaak Aaviksoo.

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