

"It is with great pain and sadness that I received news of the death of Árpád Göncz, a great democrat, courageous citizen and the first free head of state of Hungary post communist oppression," wrote President Toomas Hendrik Ilves in a letter of condolence sent to his Hungarian counterpart, János Áder.

According to the Estonian Head of State, Árpád Göncz, who served as President of Hungary in 1990-2000 and was among those who initiated the Hungarian Uprising in 1956, will be remembered in the history of Europe as a man who showed how to stand up to violence and how carefully we need to preserve and maintain our independence.

Even today, the idea expressed by Árpád Göncz during his state visit to Estonia in May 1996 stands firm: while our region lacked freedom during socialism, today we lack security, admitted President Ilves.

"Árpád Göncz, who received a Collar of the Cross of Terra Mariana from the Republic of Estonia, will live on in our memories as an influential spokesperson for Fenno-Ugric nations. He warned us that our clock of destiny had struck 11:59, and that Estonia and Hungary can play a significant role in safeguarding the language and culture of our kindred nation in order to maintain its identity," wrote the Estonian Head of State in his letter of condolence.

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