

The President of Finland, Sauli Niinistö, and his wife, Jenni Haukio, will pay their first state visit to the Republic of Estonia on 17 and 18 May. In Tallinn, the Finnish Head of State will be met by President Toomas Hendrik Ilves; the guest will also meet with the Speaker of the Parliament, Eiki Nestor, and the Prime Minister, Taavi Rõivas.

President Ilves described as symbolic the fact that the last state visit to Estonia during his term in office will be made by the President of Finland, as there are very few nations as close and at one in so many ways as the Estonians and the Finns.

"Almost a century of statehood, which has been different, in part, for Estonia and Finland, will commit us not only to look back in time but also see and understand all the connections that bind Estonia and Finland today," said President Ilves. "And let us be more forward-looking, by giving new meaning to the Europe we share now, and to our two nations as Estonia-Finland 200."

President Niinistö, who will be accompanied by the Estonian Head of State, will meet with young entrepreneurs at Mektory technology park and visit the Ärna farm of his Estonian counterpart, where the great uncle of President Ilves, Hans Rebane, was born, who established the still-operational embassy building in Helsinki during his career as an ambassador for the Republic in Estonia.

Presidents Niinistö and Ilves will meet with the students of Viljandi Ühisgümnaasium (Union Gymnasium) and give them a questions and answers session.

The spouse of the Finnish Head of State, Jenni Haukio, who will be accompanied by Ieva Ilves, will visit KUMU Art Museum, the Finnish school in Kadriorg, the Museum of Coastal Folk in Viimsi and the Estonian Traditional Music Centre in Viljandi, where she will also be given an overview of the cultural academy and approaches taken to support and promote traditional culture.

President Ilves has paid two state visits to Finland during his term in office – in 2007 and 2014. The most recent state visit to Estonia by the President of Finland – and the final state visit by

Tarja Halonen, in her then capacity as the President of Finland – was made in May 2010. President Niinistö paid a working visit to Estonia in 2010, after he was elected Head of State.

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