

This morning, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves and Mrs. Evelin Ilves will go on a three-day country visit to Hiiumaa and Saaremaa.

According to President Ilves, the key to the success of rural areas is small business, and therefore, visits to many businesses are planned during the course of the visit. "People will stay put in places where small business is thriving; they will leave places where small business is languishing," said the Estonian Head of State.

The visit will start today with a visit to the Hiiu County Information and Consultation Center in Kärkla. Thereafter, visits will be made to Sipeko, the Disabled People's Handicraft Association in Kõrgessaare, the Dale factory in Emmaste, and the wool mill in Vaemla.

A public meeting called "The Identity of Europeans" will take place tonight in Kassari, where President Ilves and Erkki-Sven Tüür will discuss topics related to being European, and to one's home and identity. "Although Estonia has opened its doors to Europe and become part of Europe, we must preserve and value our own language, culture, and history so as not to lose our voice in Europe," said President Ilves.

On the morning of Thursday, August 9th, the President will visit a unit of the students' brigade in Pühalepa Rural Municipality, as well as the Sõru Harbor and Museum. From Sõru Harbor, the President will depart for Saaremaa.

In Kuressaare, President Ilves will plant an oak in the Head of States' Grove. The itinerary includes visits to a blacksmith's shop, glass workshop, and ceramic workshop, as well as tours of Baltic Workboats in Nasva and the GoodKaarma Farm. In Koguva Village during the evening, the Estonian Head of State will visit with the promoters of life on Muhu Island.

On the morning of August 10th, President Ilves will visit Pöide Church and make a tour of Maasilinn. Before leaving the island, there are also plans to visit Muhu Furniture and the Small Boat Works in Nõmmküla.

President Ilves will visit Hiiumaa and Saaremaa this week

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