

"Today oil shale is the basic energy source of Estonia and will remain so in the near future; in the foreseeable future, it will continue to be a very important energy source, and therefore miners are really needed by all of us," said President Toomas Hendrik Ilves yesterday in Toila, when he greeted the thousands of people that had gathered for the Miners' Day.

"If we learn to better appreciate and diversify the importance of shale oil, our children and grandchildren will also be able to speak of it as Estonia's greatest national treasure. Diversity means consideration toward the environment, among other things," said the Head of State. He added that, in addition to a raw material for the generation of electricity, he also has in mind oil shale oil and crushed limestone that is needed by the builders of our houses and roads.

"And you - miners - bring this shale oil out of the mines and quarries. Thanks you the windows of Estonia are lit, the rooms are warm, and the e-country is able to operate," said the Head of State. "Thanks to you, today Estonia is one of the European Union countries in that is least dependent on imported energy. This is a question of our security and independence."

"I am very happy to stand here today among you. Women, care for your men and sons that do this difficult work," said President Ilves.

The Head of State recalled that flame for the Miners' Day will be lit by a man who is called the face of Eesti Põlevkivi because his photo is on the homepage of the company's website - Nikolai Malõšev, the industrial mining engineer at the Estonia Mine who started as an underground machinist-electrician at the Kohtla Mine 21 years ago, and has remained true to mining since then.

"He and those like him are like the backbone of East-Virumaa," said President Ilves, thanking the miners for their work and wishing their families success and happiness.

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