

On 31 August, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves participated in the inauguration Professor Alar Karis as Rector of the University of Tartu, and at the official inauguration ceremony, presented him with the Rector's Chain of Office.

In his opening remarks, President Ilves wished Rector Karis strength and a far-reaching view. "You are to become the president of an academic body with a great and long, 375-year, history," said the Estonian Head of State as he presented the Chain of Office.

"I am sure that you will have great success in your new role. At our first meeting last October, we immediately found a common language. I was ready to discuss the role of the Estonian University of Life Sciences in the landscape of Estonian higher education. However, almost immediately, our conversation shifted to biotechnology, the opportunities offered by the European Union, and the current state and future of Estonian science. It was an extremely interesting and enriching conversation," said President Ilves. "You will enrich the University of Tartu in the same way. I am sure that the university has acquired a good leader."

In his address, the Estonian Head of State also thanked Professor Tõnu Lehtsaar, who fulfilled the duties of rector for almost a year. "This year many questions at the University of Tartu have found clarification. You have ascertained how and in what direction the primus inter pares of our universities must develop," said President Ilves with approval. "The new rector has the responsibility of leading Estonia's premier research and higher education center to the goals that have been set."

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