

“The Young Eagles, the youth organization of the Defence League, is a fine opportunity for young people to take their first steps toward patriotism and the path of safekeeping and caring for one’s country,” said President Toomas Hendrik Ilves yesterday, after receiving the highest award of the Young Eagles—the Northern Eagle badge.

As the patron of the Young Eagles, the Head of State highlighted the example of the organization’s head elder, Silver Tamm, who joined the Young Eagles when he was nine years old.

“Thereafter the Defence League, compulsory service in the Defence Forces, the University of Tartu, then back to the Defence League, and now the head elder of the Young Eagles—this a straight and sensible path in the service of one’s country,” said President Ilves, adding, “however, in fifteen years, not only members of the Defence League and Defence Forces have grown up from among the Young Eagles, but also good government officials, energetic IT specialists, successful entrepreneurs, excellent workmen, and just valuable citizens.”

“The Young Eagles and *Kodutütre*, like the scouts and girl guides, are very important voluntary youth organizations,” affirmed the Head of State.

“You help to make Estonia’s present and future more secure. You set an example for your contemporaries, and help your generation grow up better and healthier,” said President Ilves.

Silver Tamm, the head elder of the 3,500-member Young Eagles, said that the Young Eagles are definitely not the ones that parents and society has to worry about. The same was confirmed by Lieutenant-Colonel Raivo Lumiste, the head of the Defence League.

“Only by directing our youth from an early age and engaging them ways that are useful to society can we guarantee a generation that provides continuity and is hopefully head and shoulders above us,” said Lieutenant-Colonel Raivo Lumiste. “I am convinced that the Young Eagles will grow up to be the best boys—patriotic, honest, energetic, and helpful Estonian citizens, of whom both the Defence League and our society as a whole can be proud.”

## **President Ilves accepted the highest award of the Young Eagles**

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