

Yesterday in Kadriorg, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves presented chemist Ivari Kaljurand with the 2007 Young Scientist Award bestowed by the President of the Republic's Cultural Foundation. The main topic of the research work by Ivari Kaljurand, a Senior Researcher at the Chemistry Institute of the University of Tartu, is the compilation of experimental acidity and basicity scales in non-aqueous solutions and the gas phase.

The President recognized the young scientist for his good work and dedication, saying that the nature and importance of the research work, as well as the number of publications, collectively confirm that a new and promising representative is being added to the line of famous Estonian physical scientists.

“Let's recall that 99 years ago one of the students of University of Tartu—chemist Wilhelm Ostwald—was crowned with a Nobel Prize,” said the Head of State. “Now almost 100 years later, the Young Scientist Award is being presented to Senior Researcher Ivari Kaljurand, at this same Chemistry Institute of the University of Tartu.”

According to President Ilves, a glance at Kaljurand's academic career to date allows one to ask, why Ostwald should be the only chemist who has studied and taught at the University of Tartu to win a Nobel Prize. “The President's Cultural Foundation Award is not the Nobel Prize, but every journey starts with the first step. The Cultural Foundation always wishes to send a clear signal with its choices,” said the Estonian Head of State.

The President stated that Kaljurand's research topic may sound complicated to bystanders—the investigation of the strength of acids and basics in non-aqueous environments. “However, if we simplify a bit, then you are ascertaining how various substances function as a result of environmental impact. This knowledge will open the way for suitable materials in the fields of medical technology, materials science, as well as chemical synthesis,” President Ilves stressed.

The Estonian Head of State expressed his satisfaction that alongside his research, Ivari Kaljurand also deals with teaching. Under his supervision, two doctoral and three Master's theses have been defended, and Kaljurand is currently advising new young scientists.

“A precondition of world-class research is an excellent research infrastructure and broad cooperation with other world research centers,” said the President. “We need young scientists, who can use these and show the way for even younger scientists. For further development, Estonia needs scientists, needs them to make sure our country does not become the stronghold of intermediaries.”

In his remarks, President Ilves thanked the entrepreneur Toomas Luman, the financier of the Young Scientist Award of 75 000 kroons.

Ivari Kaljurand thanked President Ilves, the President of the Republic’s Cultural Foundation, and Toomas Luman, and expressed his hope that the number of young researchers will continue to grow, and that Wilhelm Ostwald will get a worthy successor in the form of a young Nobel Prize winner.

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