

“The decorations presented on the eve of Independence Day represent the country’s thanks to those residents and friends of Estonia, who vocation and commitment help to protect, preserve and promote the Republic of Estonia,” President Toomas Hendrik Ilves said in Pärnu on Saturday, when presenting the national decorations at the event entitled “Estonia Expresses Gratitude 2008”.

“National decorations mean that the country values and recognizes those who have done something extraordinary, who have done more than their vocation or service directly demands,” said the Head of State.

President Ilves recalled that the bearers of national decorations include world-famous historians, writers, and scientists, recognized promoters of Estonia’s culture and sports, journalists, state officials, promoters of local life and family values in our rural municipalities and cities, but also those, thanks to whom Estonia’s security is externally and internally protected—the members of the Defence Forces who have courageously served on foreign missions and the police who have protected our domestic security.

“You in this hall are the ones whose ideas and actions make Estonia stronger, make Estonia greater, make Estonia more caring,” said the Head of State.

“This caring is the foundation supporting our society. The caring of the state means consideration toward its people. Caring for one’s fellow citizens however may just be a smile shown to a passerby or the understanding and helpful attitude of an official toward those who come to seek help,” President Ilves said.

“You carry this caring. Caring toward the Estonian state and toward your fellow citizens. For this Estonia thanks you,” the Head of State said addressing the bearers of national decorations.

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