

Today President Toomas Hendrik Ilves received Gerd Kanter, who won gold medal at the Beijing Olympics, and Jüri Jaanson and Tõnu Endrekson, who won a silver medal, along with their coaches and family members.

“It is hard to put your achievements into words. Only you, your coaches and families know the actual price of your medals. For the rest of us, allow us the opportunity to acknowledge and thank you,” the Head of State said. “Therefore, I want to thank you, to thank you once more for the proud feeling that your moments of victory generated in the people of Estonia.”

According to President Ilves, the attitudes toward life, lifestyles and achievements of the Olympic medal winners set an example for thousands of young people. “This is the agreeable burden of an obligation that you certainly bear with pleasure. Because one’s status obligates,” the President added.

The Head of State said that 42-year-old Jüri Jaanson has a profound message for others—that strong desire, experience and team spirit can destroy the most powerful age-related cliché that already labels a athlete an old master at the age of 35.

Gerd Kanter and Tõnu Endrekson, both 29, are reaching their maturity as top athletes, where it is the mental equilibrium, experience, and self-confidence of a winner that achieve success in the battles with ever younger competitors, the Head of State stated.

“A month ago in Beijing you already proved your winning character to the whole world and tens of thousands of fans in Estonia. Therefore, I wish you new Olympic victories four and eight years from now,” President Ilves said.

“I also want to thank the coaches, sports associations, supporters and the Estonian Olympic Committee. Two medals from the Olympic Games is a great achievement. Thanks to your help and behind-the-scenes work, this was achieved,” the Head of State said.

## **The President of the Republic acknowledged the Olympic medal winners**

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President Ilves presented a gift of a mini-sculpture of glass and stone by glass artist Jelena Kapparova to Gerd Kanter, Jüri Jaanson and Tõnu Endrekson.

“You are strong men, like stones. The opportunity to win, on the other hand, is fragile like glass and you had sufficient strength to seize the moment,” the Head of State said.

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