

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves signed [a resolution](#) today conferring decorations on 97 citizens of the Republic of Estonia and foreigners in connection with the Estonian Independence Day and in recognition of their services to Estonia.

“On the eve of the 91st anniversary of the Republic of Estonia, our country is grateful and recognises people who have maintained, promoted and safeguarded Estonia’s independence,” President Ilves wrote in the foreword to the resolution.

“We thank and recognize those whose actions have helped Estonia become smarter, greater, more successful and more caring,” the Head of State stressed.

The Order of the Cross of Terra Mariana First Class will be presented to European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, in recognition of his contribution to the enlargement of the European Union and the successful integration of the member states into the European Commission, and to Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who has been a resolute supporter of Estonia and the other Baltic countries during their accession to the European Union and NATO.

Estonia thanks Endel Kirs, Heino Laansalu and Lembit Põdre, who as conscripts in the Signal Battalion on June 21, 1940 resisted the nation’s subverters who demanded they give up their weapons. Estonia also owes thanks to Henno Ustav, who for decades hid in his home the Cross of Liberty from the Tallinn monument to the Cross of Liberty holders. Estonia is grateful to two freedom fighters who joined organisations opposing the occupation powers and were therefore punished for political reasons—Vello-Johannes Arras, who belonged to the Salajane Kuperjanovlaste Organisatsioon and Priit Silla who belonged to the Eesti Rahvuslaste Liit.

Those to be awarded the Order of the Cross of the Eagle include the military personnel, Corporals Egerd Erreline and Rasmus Penno, and Privates Aleksander Issajev, Ott Jõesaar and Andrei Vesterinen who were very seriously wounded on Estonia’s most important foreign mission in Afghanistan. Decorations will also be presented to Captain Margus Kuul, who led the Estonian infantry platoon in Iraq, and to Sergeant Major Erki Brackmann, who, while serving on a mission in Afghanistan, evacuated two seriously wounded soldiers and saved the lives of two allied soldiers who were wounded in the attack.

Decorations will also be awarded to the Captain of the Border Guards, Jalmar Ernits, who has participated in the rescue of more than 30 people from Lake Peipsi; Captain Vjatšeslav Želnovakov, a long-serving helicopter pilot in the Border Guard's Aviation Unit, who participated in many rescue operations; Priit Laos, an official of the Rescue Service whose activities in the West-Estonia Rescue Center have helped to significantly reduce the number of fatalities; prison official Hedi Reima, who helped to resolve the hostage situation at the Viru Prison; as well as to Urmas Krüger, faculty member at the Police Academy and long-term investigator, judge Sirja Tooming of the Rakvere Courthouse of the Viru County Court, and Natalja Vester, Senior Prosecutor at the Northern District Prosecutor's Office, who has focused on conducting proceedings for serious crimes against persons.

For long-term scientific work, Estonia thanks and recognises academician Jaak Järv, Professor of Organic Chemistry at the University of Tartu; Professor Mihkel Kaljurand, Director of the Chemistry Institute at the Tallinn University of Technology; long-term lecturer in civil engineering Toomas Laur; Ülo Mander, Professor of Natural Geography and Landscape Ecology at the University of Tartu, and Väino Puura, Professor Emeritus of Geology at the University of Tartu.

Estonia also owes thanks to sports heroes Gerd Kanter and Tõnu Endrekson, as well as to Anna Levandi, who currently works as a coach and promoter of civil society, as well as to Raul Rebane, who is the head of Olympic gold medallist Gerd Kanter's team.

In recognition of their service, the country is presenting decorations to long-term oncologist-surgeon Ants Vaar; to Pille Alaver, protector of the rights of abused children; to Lea Möll, long-serving counselor to foster and adoptive parents; to Tiiu Peterson, developer of the Tallinn Children's Shelter; to Reet Hiimäe, the founder of Estonia's first shelter for women suffering from domestic abuse; to Kaia Kaldvee, protector of the rights of disabled people, and to Lea Viires, organiser of the self-help movement for the elderly.

As promoters of cultural life, Estonia is grateful to the cultural facilitator and translator Ülev Aaloe; linguist Helmi Neetar, one of the compilers of the Dictionary of Estonian Dialects; conductors Jüri Alperden and Erich Kõlar; Aime Vettik, an organizer and developer of Estonian Legal Language; Allar Kaasik, founding member of the early music ensemble Hortus Musicus and initiator of the Pärnu David Oistrakh Festival; Svetlana Jantšek, principal organizer of the Golden Mask in Estonia Theatre Festival, and actors Viire Valdma and Tõnu Kark; filmmakers Maureen Castle and James R. Tusty, the authors of the documentary, The Singing Revolution; Marina Kuvaitseva, preserver Estonia's Old Believers' culture; and Lyudmilla Gluškovskaya,

long-serving editor-in-chief of the Russian-language magazine, Võšgorod.

Decorations were also merited by Aare Hindremäe supporter of the Crimean Estonians and Evald Soomägi, maintainer of Estonian culture in Sweden.

Estonia is also grateful to renowned promoters of educational life including Vally Tamm, teacher of Estonian language, literature and culture at the Petseri 2nd Secondary School; Reet Klaasmägi, Head of Studies Organization at the East-Viru County Vocational Education Center; Ott Ojaveer, Director of the Hugo Treffner Upper Secondary School; Heli Raidla, long-term Põlva County handicraft teacher and folk costume endorser; Anu Saabas, Director of Studies at the Kuressaare Upper Secondary School; and long-serving physical education teacher and youth athletics coach Enn Roosi.

Decorations will also be presented to Valeri Peterson, long-term employee of Eesti Energia, at whose initiative the independent operation of the Estonian electrical system was tested, which was later expanded to all the Baltic countries, and to Aare Kübarsepp, South-Estonia Coordinator of the Transport Trade Union, who has helped to make bus drivers into one of the best-organized workers' groups in Estonia.

Estonia is grateful to Ervin Runnel, promoter of local life in Järva County; Heller Sööl, who has been named one of the developmental engines in Hiiu County's Emmaste Rural Municipality; Tiiu Tomingas, initiator of the Kiideva Village Society in Lääne County; and Jüri Tõnisson, researcher of Narva's history and initiator of the Heritage Protection Society.

Decorations will be conferred as a sign of our gratitude to the following promoters of enterprise: Endel Palla, founder of the Keila Industrial Park and AS Harju Elekter, as well as supporter of engineering education; Tiit Niilo, head of the Nopri Farm Dairy and promoter of local life; Margus Reinsalu, Chairman of the KC Group Supervisory Board and promoter of Estonian business in many foreign countries; and Ain Tromp, Chairman of the AS Aspi Supervisory Board and supporter of professional higher education.

The following Estonian donors are being recognised with the Order of the Estonian Red Cross: Jüri Kalbach, Jaanus Kodu, Priit Maaker and Jelena Sokolova, who have all donated blood over 100 times.

Estonia is grateful to Canadian residents Inna and Aadu Randpalu, whose eight-year effort has resulted in nearly 10 million EEK being donated to the Tallinn Children's Hospital Foundation and who have personally donated 1.3 million EEK to the foundation.

Decorations will also be presented to Richard C. Barth, official at the United States Department of Homeland Security, who helped organise Estonia's acceptance into the US Visa Waiver Program; Claude Chêne, a high official at the European Commission; Pekka Hallberg, President of Finland's Superior Administrative Court and collaborator in the development of the Estonian judicial system; Finnish parliamentarian Heidi Hautala; Arvo Kalervo Hovi, long-term Professor of History and Recent Baltic History at the University of Turku; Director of the Finnish Military Museum Markku Juhana Palokangas, who organized the donation of historical weapons to the Laidoner Museum; Zdravko Kissiov, a translator of Estonian poetry from Bulgaria; Sergei Lössenko, Director of the Novaja Opera Theatre and facilitator of cultural relations between Estonia and Russia; Kazuto Matsumura, faculty member of the University of Tokyo and researcher of Estonian language in Japan; Peter Van Loan, member of the Canadian Government and one of the initiators in Ottawa of achieving visa-free travel with Canada; and European Parliament member Christopher Beazley, who helped Estonia accede to the European Union.

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